

**Deindustrialization and Urban Regeneration: *Nietzsche, Activism, and Organically
Emergent Forms of Civic Engagement in Windsor/ Detroit***

Grant Yocom

Interdisciplinary Humanities PhD Program

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

Faculty of Humanities, Brock University St. Catharines, Ontario

© 2016

For my father, Kenneth W. Yocom.

Abstract

Deindustrialization and Urban Regeneration: *Nietzsche, Activism, and Organically Emergent Forms of Civic Engagement in Windsor/ Detroit*

The deindustrialization of cities represents a moment of cultural and political weakness and insecurity about what it means to be urban. Specifically, within Windsor and Detroit the traditionally rooted modes of production and habitation that have framed the cultural and political landscape as well as the identities of these urban centers are in a state of massive transition. Within these urban centers we find engaged residents mobilizing critical, self-critical and projective dispositions capable of meeting the challenges of their context, as well as issuing inquiries that put the inquirer on the spot, produce discomfort, and have potency: the capacity to change the way the inquirer thinks, acts and inhabits urban landscapes. These practices are vital responses to the questions that drive our lived-experience of city life and are in the end matters of survival. This work deploys an interpretation of the *new category of philosopher* forecasted by Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil* in order to explore this moment when culture and politics meet at street level in the transitional deindustrializing cities of Windsor and Detroit. This is a difficult moment to make articulate. Many of the criticisms and prescriptions at work in the particular projects that we will examine are expressed as action: performed critique.

These urban centers themselves have the capacity to become foxholes of sorts. Cities have a degree of receptivity to urban activism, and thus can become discrete political entities that mediate between culturally rooted criticisms and the larger political landscape. These cities in turn have the capacity to generate

larger political effects. Urban activist initiatives, addressed in this project both theoretically and in their particularity, are rooted in the local and the biological in a manner that intimately ties experiences of suffering at the hands of economic and political systems responding to their acts of resistance. Activist collectives aim to inflict a wound to the overall culture, thus inoculating not only the immediate urban culture, but culture more generally with something new and empowering. This work explores the tension between embedded criticisms and proposals performed by urban activists and the trenchant forces that frustrate these actions.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation could not have been completed without the support of my supervisory committee, professors, colleagues, friends, neighbours, and family. I would first like to thank Dr. Leah Bradshaw for her professional guidance, emotional support, and high level of intellectual engagement with this project. On many occasions throughout the composition of this work Dr. Bradshaw has extended herself by offering advice and encouragement well beyond the bounds of professional engagement. I continue to value both her mentorship and friendship.

I would also like to thank Dr. Christine Daigle and Dr. David Fancy for their valuable and persistent recommendations, criticisms, extremely perceptive reflections, and for their time and effort throughout this process.

This project is indebted to the financial and institutional support from a number of sources: Interdisciplinary Humanities, Brock University; Faculty of Graduate Studies, Brock University; The Humanities Research Institute, Brock University; and The Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS).

This theoretical and practical endeavor would not have been possible without the support of my partner, Dr. Jennifer Willet. Many of our conversations have carried over in important ways into this work. I cannot thank Jennifer enough for her patience, as well as both practical and emotional support throughout the entire doctoral process.

I would like to express my appreciation for the friendship and support of both Joshua Babcock and Dr. Brian MacPherson. At the final stages of this dissertation both Joshua and Brian stepped in to offer much needed technical assistance that added much to the overall quality of this work.

I would like to thank my daughters, Abigail and Beatrix Yocom, who came into existence during this undertaking, thus adding urgency to the drive to complete this dissertation. I would also like to express my special gratitude to my mother, Sallie A. Yocom, and father, Kenneth W. Yocom to whom this work is dedicated.

Introduction: Rise and Fall	1
Chapter 1: What Do Places Demand?	32
1.1 <i>Cities: Engagement</i>	42
1.2 <i>Detroit: The Myth</i>	56
1.3 <i>Deindustrializing Cities: Latent capacities</i>	87
Chapter 2: Nietzsche Insurgent	108
2.1 <i>Nietzsche: Context and Topology</i>	117
2.2 <i>Subjectivity and its Constraints</i>	127
2.3 <i>Memory, History and Promising</i>	157
2.4 <i>New Category of Philosopher and Community</i>	174
Chapter 3: Embedded Embodied Criticism	181
3.1 <i>Mobilized Crisis</i>	189
3.2 <i>Immanent Critique</i>	201
3.3 <i>Experimentation</i>	231
Chapter 4: Forces In The Way	263
4.1 <i>Reconfigured Space/ Reconfigured Subjects</i>	278
4.2 <i>Abandoned Space/ Abandoned Subjects</i>	293
4.3 <i>'The Motor City is Burning'</i>	317
4.4 <i>The Rule of the Rich</i>	326
Conclusion: Forward	348
Bibliography	356

List of Illustrations:

Figure 1 *Detroit RenCen through Windsor GM Assembly Demolition, Seneca Street.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 2.

Figure 2 *Windsor and Detroit from Belle Isle.* Detroit, MI. August 24, 2013. Photo Credit: Jennifer Willet. P. 4.

Figure 3 *Spirit of Detroit.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 10.

Figure 4 *RenCen From Old Howard Road.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 11.

Figure 5 *Lafayette Park Townhomes.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 13.

Figure 6 *Whole Foods Market Midtown.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 16.

Figure 7 *Eastern Market Mural.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 17.

Figure 8 *Eastern Market Shed 2.* Detroit, MI. August 23, 2013. Photo Credit: Jennifer Willet. P. 18.

Figure 1.1 *View From Borrowed Apartment, Hendrie Street, Midtown (Background: Fisher Body Plant).* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 33.

Figure 1.2 *My Street.* Windsor, ON. May 27, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 37.

Figure 1.3 *Club Lofts Condominiums from Argyle Street.* Windsor, ON. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 47.

Figure 1.4 *'Detroit Renewable Power' Incinerator, Midtown.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 54.

Figure 1.5 *Michigan Central Station.* Detroit, MI. October 30, 2009. Photo Credit: Jennifer Willet. P. 56.

Figure 1.6 *Bricktown Graffiti.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 58.

Figure 1.7 *Storefront Sign: "Detroit -VS- Everybody," Eastern Market.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 60.

Figure 1.8 *Windsor from Detroit People Mover.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 70.

Figure 1.9 *Niki's, Beaubien Street, formerly the Dodge Brothers Facility.* Detroit MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 73.

Figure 1.10 *J.L. Hudson Store Comemorative Plaque, ("The Big Store") Woodward Ave.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 77.

Figure 1.11 *Parking Lot/ Formerly Hudsons, Woodward Ave.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 78.

Figure 1.12 *Greek Town.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 79.

- Figure 1.13** *Georgia Street Community Garden Sign*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 91.
- Figure 1.14** *Heidelberg Project Shoes*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 92.
- Figure 1.15** *Walker Power Building Windsor*. August 10, 2016. Windsor, ON. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 107.
- Figure 2.1** *Gravel piles along Detroit waterfront, viewed from Windsor Sculpture Park*. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 126
- Figure 2.2** *West Detroit from West Windsor*. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 180.
- Figure 3.1** *Detroit RenCen through Windsor GM Assembly Demolition, Walker Road*. Windsor, ON. August 18, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 187.
- Figure 3.2** *Welcome to Windsor*. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. 188.
- Figure 3.3** *Michigan Theatre Parking Garage*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 193.
- Figure 3.4** *Michigan Theatre Parking Garage 1*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 194.
- Figure 3.5** *Michigan Theatre Parking Garage 2*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 195.
- Figure 3.6** *Graffiti Gallery at Motor City Java House, Blight Busters Home Base*. Detroit, MI. June 18, 2014. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 199.
- Figure 3.7** *'Welcome to Detroit' at Alter Road*. Detroit, MI. August 23, 2013. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 201.
- Figure 3.8** *Grosse Pointe, Two Blocks from Alter Road*. Grosse Pointe, MI. August 23, 2013. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 202.
- Figure 3.9** *Detroit, Two Blocks from Alter Road*. Detroit, MI. August 23, 2013. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 203.
- Figure 3.10** *Windsor Signage*. Windsor, ON. May 25, 2009. Broken City Lab. Photo Credit: Steven Leyden Cochrane. <http://www.brokencitylab.org/blog/windsor-signage/>. P. 206.
- Figure 3.11** *Hantz Farms Building*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 209.
- Figure 3.11** *Earthworks Urban Farm Sign*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 210.
- Figure 3.12** *'Free Food,' Ford City Community Garden*. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 211.
- Figure 3.13** *Tire Planter, Brightmoor Farmway*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 212.

Figure 3.14 *'Windsor Essex County Community Gardening Network,' Ford City Community Garden.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 214.

Figure 3.15 *'Bee Yard,' Georgia Street Community Garden.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 215.

Figure 3.16 *Campus Community Garden, University of Windsor.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 216.

Figure 3.17 *Greenhouse, Boggs Educational Center.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 217.

Figure 3.18 *Bruce Park Community Garden.* Windsor, ON. August 15, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 219.

Figure 3.19 *Walker Power from Riverside Drive.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 236.

Figure 3.20 *CAMPP Lawn Signs.* Windsor, On. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 237.

Figure 3.21 *Proposed Mega-Hospital Site.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 238.

Figure 3.22 *Georgia Street Community Garden Beds.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 241.

Figure 3.23 *Georgia Street Community Garden, Community Center Garden.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 342.

Figure 3.24 *Graffiti Gallery at Motor City Java House 1, Blight Busters Home Base.* Detroit, MI. June 18, 2014. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

Figure 3.25 *Brightmoor Farmway Shed.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 255.

Figure 3.26 *Brightmoor Farmway Youth Garden.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 256.

Figure 3.27 *Brightmoor Farmway Beds and Benches.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 257.

Figure 3.28 *Brightmoor Farmway 'Litter Free'.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 258.

Figure 4.1 *Wyandotte Street 'Leopard's Lounge'.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 263.

Figure 4.2 *Campus Martius Downtown Detroit.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 266.

Figure 4.3 *Comerica Park.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 270.

Figure 4.4 *Windsor International Aquatic and Training Centre.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 271.

Figure 4.5 *Adventure Bay*. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 272.

Figure 4.6 *Lafayette Park Townhomes 1*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 273.

Figure 4.7 *Michigan Ave., Downtown*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 279.

Figure 4.8 *Plaque, Michigan Building*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 280.

Figure 4.9 *Boggs School*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 289.

Figure 4.10 *Play Space, Boggs School*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 290.

Figure 4.10 *Jefferson Ave*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 294.

Figure 4.11 *East End Neighbourhood*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 296.

Figure 4.12 *'Detroit -VS- Everybody,' Eastern Market 1*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 297.

Figure 4.13 *Michigan Central Station, Rear View*. Detroit, MI. October 30, 2009. Photo Credit: Jennifer Willet. P. 298.

Figure 4.14 *Weathered 'Welcome to Ford City' Mural*. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 302.

Figure 4.15 *Heidelberg Project Vehicle*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 309.

Figure 4.16 *Heidelberg Project, Street*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 310.

Figure 4.17 *Heidelberg Project Ark*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 311.

Figure 4.18 *Heidelberg Project 'Unleaded Regular.'* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 312.

Figure 4.19 *Heidelberg Project, 'Heidelberg Television, Grant and Tyree.'* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 314.

Figure 4.20 *Heidelberg Project Clock*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 315.

Figure 4.21 *Heidelberg Project Security Notice*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 318.

Figure 4.22 *Heidelberg Project Solar Powered Security Cameras*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 320.

Figure 4.23 *Woodward Ave., Downtown*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom. P. 331.

Figure 4.24 *Boarded Up Houses, Indian Road.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 332.

Figure 4.25 *Little Caesars 'Hot and Ready' Stadium Construction.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 333.

Figure 4.26 *House, Indian Road.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 335.

Figure 4.27 *Construction Bricktown.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock. P. 347.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout in reference to primary texts from Nietzsche.

BGE	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
D	<i>Daybreak</i>
EH	<i>Ecce Homo</i>
GM	<i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i>
GS	<i>The Gay Science</i>
HH	<i>Human, All Too Human</i>
TI	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
UM	<i>Untimely Meditations</i>
WS	<i>The Wander and His Shadow</i>
Z	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>

Introduction

(Rise and Fall)

...the past and present are one, that is to say, with all their diversity identical in all that is typical and as the omnipresence of imperishable types, a motionless structure of value that cannot alter and significance that is always the same. Just as the hundreds of different languages correspond to the same typically unchanging needs of man, so that he who understood these needs would be unable to learn anything new from these languages, so the suprahistorical thinker beholds the history of nations and of individuals from within, clairvoyantly divining the original meaning of the various hieroglyphics and gradually even coming wearily to avoid the endless stream of new signs: for how should the unending superfluity of events not reduce him to satiety, over-satiety and finally nausea! (UM II 1)

Growing up in Windsor imbues a person with a particular and peculiar sort of historical sensibility. As a manufacturing town intrinsically tied to the fate of our larger neighbour ironically to the North, Windsor is prone to frequent booms and busts, and our relationship to history and economy asserts a naive faith in this repeating cycle. *Bust goes the manufacturing industry*, but not to worry, since all of this has happened before, and it will happen again. It has always been *followed by a boom, another bust, and another boom*, and so on and so forth; this we have been taught by our larger neighbour Detroit, and this we have tended to naively believe. This cycle seems natural, inevitable, and omnipresent like movements of weather patterns. In Windsor and Detroit we understand ourselves to be more susceptible to these variations, and thus more privy to an understanding of the inevitability of this cyclic pattern. As the old saying goes, “The nation gets a cold, Detroit gets pneumonia.” Until recently this cyclical understanding has served the region relatively well. It insulates the general spirit of these cities from the despair of the busts by preserving a faith in the inevitability of the boom to come, while reminding us to make the most of the booms since there is always another bust looming. The popular Nietzschean

notion of the eternal return, “The eternal hourglass of existence is turned over again and again, and you with it, a speck of dust!” (GS 341), is thus interpreted in this industrial/deindustrializing context in a fatalistic and facile manner.



Figure 1 *Detroit RenCen through Windsor GM Assembly Demolition, Seneca Street.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshaua Babcock.

This understanding of repetitive cycles, far from acting as the post-metaphysical re-spiriting thought experiment suggested by Nietzsche, renders Detroit as constituted by forces that must merely be surrendered to and endured. Rather than presenting us with a powerful understanding of the significance of every moment of our lives, cyclic busts and booms as they are understood in our region produce a will to surrender. Until recently this process of ebb and flood has seemed historically reliable, although of late, the productive historical and economic ebbs have seemed less spectacular while the destructive floods have

been more profound, thereby producing a palpable sense of a trajectory of descent.

Windsor is both literally and figuratively in the shadow of Detroit. This is taken by some to be the main identifying characteristic of Windsor. In fact, Detroit is so close to Windsor that in 1836 upon the creation of the city, the name “South Detroit” was seriously considered.¹ Historically Detroit has been perceived to be between five to ten times the size of Windsor in terms of population, though currently it sits somewhere just over three times its size due to the massive egress of residents that started in the fifties and accelerated exponentially between 2000 and 2010.² Windsor has traditionally been a tourist destination, especially popular among nineteen and twenty year old (mostly suburban) Americans who capitalize on the lower Ontario drinking age. The economy and general commercial disposition of Windsor reflects this – at one point Windsor boasted more adult entertainment establishments, drinking establishments, and bingo halls per capita than any other city in North America, all due to the relative value of the American dollar and the disparity between respective drinking ages. In my younger years growing up in Windsor, heading into my own downtown I would find hordes of younger Americans who on the whole paid only quasi-attention to local laws, drunk, frequently violent, and dominating the social landscape. Detroit culture, flooding through radio and

¹ See: Colin Read, "Uppermost Canada: The Western District and the Detroit Frontier, 1800-1850," *Michigan Historical Review* 28.1 (2002): 137.

² By 2000 the population of Detroit stood at just over half of its 1950 population of over 1.8 million. Then, between 2000 and 2010, the city lost over a quarter of *those* citizens with its current population estimated to stand at 680 250.

television media, dominates the scene in Windsor to such an extent that many Windsorites tend to feel more comfortable using imperial rather than metric scales.



Figure 2 *Windsor and Detroit from Belle Isle.* Detroit, MI. August 24, 2013. Photo Credit: Jennifer Willet.

This influx of American patrons in Windsor has dwindled significantly since the institution of tighter border controls following 9/11. Moreover, between 2006 and 2014 the Canadian and American dollars approached parity in value, offering further disincentive to would-be tourists. Accordingly, many restaurants, bars, adult entertainment facilities, and bingo halls (the heart of Windsor's secondary economy, next to automotive manufacturing) have closed, leaving much of Windsor's once busy downtown vacant. As if to add further insult to injury, a recent Vice Magazine article written about Windsor sports the title "This City Near

Detroit Might Be the 'Worst Place on Earth'", reverberating off of the Stephen Colbert reference to Windsor as "the earth's rectum,"³ and highlighting what the author considers to be the six attracting factors of Windsor. They are:

1. "It's near Detroit."
2. "Pizza."⁴
3. "Strip clubs galore."
4. "It's cheap as fuck"
5. "Budding Weed Scene."
6. "There's beauty in shittiness."⁵

This coupled with the 30% decline in jobs related to Windsor's primary manufacturing economy over the past decade or so has reinforced our perceived connection to Detroit through our shared palpable sense of a trajectory of descent.

This descent, as it pertains specifically to Detroit, finds expression in the works of Jerry Herron, historian and director of the Honours College at Wayne State University in Midtown Detroit, who argues:

Detroit sits precisely at the border of city and not-city; its condition renders the conflict between the natural world and the built environment in a specially forceful way, as Solnit points out. Here, the fearful energy released by a city in decay raises questions not only about the economic and governmental systems that produced Detroit (and America), but also about the humanity of citizens so transformed by urbanism that they can visit upon each other all the miseries and cruelty locally deployed. It's enough to make a person

³ See: Michael Serapio, "Colbert attack on 'Earth's rectum' Windsor extends to Winnipeg, CBC," *CBC News Windsor*, November 15, 2012, Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/colbert-attack-on-earth-s-rectum-windsor-extends-to-winnipeg-cbc-1.1185799>.

⁴ Windsoites are quite proud of our pizza. See: City Desk, "Judges Agree Windsor Has Some World-Class Pizza," *Windsor Star*, March 30, 2014. Accessed April 20, 2016, <http://windsorstar.com/news/judges-agree-windsor-has-some-world-class-pizza>.

⁵ See Manisha Krishnan, "This City Near Detroit Might Be the 'Worst Place on Earth'," *Vice Magazine*, April 14th, 2016," Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://www.vice.com/read/windsor-ontario-residents-tell-us-why-its-not-the-worst-place-on-earth>.

wonder, and especially to make Americans wonder, and maybe the rest of the world wonder too, as we all verge on a global urbanism and the city/not opposition achieves universal relevance. We wonder how so much that is valuable, in both material and human terms, could be so quickly and violently squandered. And we wonder at the cost — the waste and cruelty, and what the city has to do with it all, and what this place might portend.⁶

For Herron, the descent of Detroit is not merely the death of the city implied by Charlie LeDuff in his *Detroit: An American Autopsy*. For Herron, the descent of Detroit has reached a state not of vanishing, but of perpetual self-negation – both literally in terms of the deconstruction of the physical landscape, and figuratively in terms of the lived contradictions between dominant North American structures of value and identity formation and their abject failure in the context of a deindustrializing landscape. Herron reflects:

Detroit looks just like a city, except it's not one any more. But instead of vanishing, like those Mayan cities of Mesoamerica, it persists in a death-in-life existence, and that is what lends the place an uncanny relevance...⁷

Detroit, by the assessment offered by Herron, is resting at the boundary between being a city by the modes of assessment that are typically employed to judge a city (economic vitality, structured neighbourhoods, municipal services, etc.), and not being a city (“...houses and factories, theaters and schools, streets and whole neighborhoods now walked away from on so spectacular a scale that you can’t fault other people when they register amazement.”⁸): a city/not.

Much has been written to condemn the representations of the landscape of Detroit as it tends to be represented in photo-suits like those presented by Andrew Moore in his *Detroit Disassembled*, although a brief drive through the industrial and residential districts of the city in many ways confirms this portrait of

⁶ Jerry Herron, “Borderland/ Borderama/ Detroit: Part 1”, *Places*, July 2010. Accessed April 20, 2016, <https://placesjournal.org/article/borderama-detroit-1/>.

⁷ Herron, “Borderland/ Borderama/ Detroit: Part 1”

⁸ Herron, “Borderland/ Borderama/ Detroit: Part 1”

a disassembling city. The city hit its population height in the 1950's, unofficially around two million residents who flocked to Detroit for some of the best paying manufacturing jobs in the world. The advent of Henry Ford's moving assembly line configured much of the layout of the city in a hegemonic fashion. John Gallagher, in his 2004 article simply called "Detroit," notes:

In the years of Detroit's greatest growth – say, 1900 through 1950 – hundreds of thousands of houses were built in the city. Many were small, designed in haste for workers at the auto plants springing up all over the city. These houses were crowded into neighborhoods anchored by parish churches, by neighborhood banks, by tightly packed rows of commercial enterprises. A resident might live a whole life in such a neighborhood, emerging just for the occasional outing to a baseball game at Tiger Stadium just an easy streetcar ride away, or to a Christmas-shopping spree at the downtown Hudson's store.⁹

These neighbourhoods operated like holding facilities for workers - parts waiting to be assembled themselves – within a landscape itself modeled along the lines of assembly line production. Joe Kerr, in his 2000 article "Trouble in Motor City" notes the influence of the famous Detroit architect Albert Kahn on the retooling of the city's infrastructure, with an influence that eventually spread throughout the world:

High-rise offices and hotels had sprouted in the downtown area, transforming the city in the manner of the classic American vision of the City Beautiful. By contrast, the enormous automotive factories ringing the city had become celebrated icons of the European Modern movement. For just as the Detroit industrialist Henry Ford had revolutionized the means of production, so the Detroit architect Albert Kahn had pioneered a new form of architecture in which to house the new assembly lines. Most factories of the time were still being constructed on the model established by 18th [century] British mills, but Kahn superseded the standard factory building with something quicker and cheaper to build, and infinitely more fireproof. The system of reinforced concrete construction he introduced at the Packard Factory in 1905, and refined at Highland Park in 1908, provided large, uninterrupted spaces between columns, essential for the new production methods, and allowed natural light to flood in from floor-to-ceiling windows.¹⁰

⁹ John Gallagher, "Detroit" in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt, comp. Berlin: Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany: 2004), 41.

¹⁰ Joe Kerr, "Trouble in Motor City," in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt, comp. Berlin: Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany: 2004), 65.

The rest of the infrastructure, from power, to water, to the interstate highway system, emerged under the social and economic pressures of Fordism's impact.

Charles Waldheim, in his 2002 article "Motor City" notes (unsettlingly) the impetus for the interstate:

Much has been written on the military origins of the modern interstate highway system in the U.S. and the impact of military policy on postwar American settlement patterns has been well documented. While the highway is arguably the clearest evidence of Fordism's impact on postwar urban arrangement in America, it is also clear that this most Fordist network is itself an essentially military technology. Given Ford's well-documented sympathy to Nazism, the infrastructural and logistical logics of the German war machine provided an essential case study in the virtues of Fordist mobility. Not simply a model of production, but an essential Fordist precept, mobilization was understood not only as a preparation for the projection of military power but also the retooling of the very industrial process itself toward martial ends. It should come as no surprise that the modern interstate highway, the very invention Ford's success postulated was itself first proven necessary through German military engineering. By witnessing the logistical superiority and civil defense potential of the Autobahns, the American military-industrial complex was able to articulate the need for the highway as an increasingly urgent matter of national security.¹¹

The building of this highway network, which began with the discontinuation of the Detroit rail service and massive federal funding for the project in 1956, drove these roadways through functional, but mostly poor African American neighbourhoods ultimately displacing an estimated 17000 residents and effectively cutting neighbour off from neighbour. The interstate highway network also produced the egress of residents from the city, enabled by affordable automobiles and motivated by cheaper land in both the rural and the rapidly suburbanizing counties surrounding Detroit. The population of Detroit rose, flooding into these initially tightly packed neighbourhoods, only to begin immediately to fall like Icarus, having flown too close to the sun. Compounded by three separate

¹¹ Charles Waldheim, "Motor City," in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt, comp. Berlin: Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany: 2004), 58.

race riots¹² (urban rebellions), the phenomenon of flight from Detroit had already hit its fever pitch between 1955 and 1960 when Detroit lost 25% of its two million residents. The residents that left were those with the wealth and social affluence to be able to do so, so that much of the commercial wealth of Detroit began to reside outside of the city.

Today the population of Detroit is less than seven hundred thousand residents, stabilizing somewhat but still falling. The formerly densely packed working class neighbourhoods have all but collapsed, many having only three or four houses left of the hundred or so that would have made up a city block. The physical traces of this absence have made a palpable psychological effect upon residents and visitors alike. Much of the tightly packed commercial enterprises that traditionally satisfied the needs of residents have also left, save for some gas stations and party stores, moving on to the financially affluent suburbs. As Herron estimates, what is left stands at the border of city and not-city (what he calls in his three part essay “Borderland/ Borderama/ Detroit” the ‘city/not’).

Herron reflects:

There is no *culture* — for lack of a better word — no context of public memory and social expectation that would bind together all that the city contains. What does it add up to, all this abandonment of lives and buildings, neighborhoods and property? It doesn't seem to add up to anything, other than the decontextualized spectacle itself and the demographic souvenir-hunting opportunities it provides. This city is never coming back; whatever happens next will be without urban precedent because the context of city no longer applies in this place where history has finally run out. And so the reason we come to Detroit — immigrants, tourists, artists, journalists alike — is to engage a fantasy about how we can always walk away from the past, from the now blown promise of an erstwhile

¹² 1942, 1943, and most famously in 1967. For excellent analyses of these social disturbances see June Thomas, “Racial Disunity,” in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt, comp. Berlin: Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany, 2004), 85-94., and Celeste Headlee, “A Brief History of Segregation in Metro Detroit,” in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt, comp. Berlin: Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany, 2004), 95-98.

prosperity that was once made real for generations of Americans. There's probably not a better place in this country, maybe in the world, for this kind of work.¹³



Figure 3 *Spirit of Detroit*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

This reflection from Herron is contradicted by the motto of the city emblazoned upon the city's flag. The two Latin mottos read, somewhat tellingly, *Speramus Meliora* and *Resurget Cineribus*, meaning "We hope for better things" and "It will rise from the ashes". Detroit, by the mottos inscribed here and the imagery of the

¹³ Jerry Herron, "The Forgetting Machine: Notes Toward a History of Detroit", *Places*, January 2012, Accessed April 21, 2016. <https://placesjournal.org/article/the-forgetting-machine-notes-toward-a-history-of-detroit>.

phoenix implied in a 'rise from the ashes,' has internalized its own perpetual 'coming back' from the brink of crisis. If Herron's reflection is correct, however, there may be no 'coming back' left for Detroit, at least none that employs the same measure of prosperity that was operative in previous incarnations of the city.



Figure 4 *RenCen From Old Howard Road. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.*

The dominant feature, visible from almost all entry points to Windsor is the Detroit skyline dominated by the semi-fortress structure of the 'Renaissance Center,' ('RenCen') surrounded by dozens of skyscrapers that round out the skyline of Detroit. The RenCen itself consists of a group of seven interconnected tower structures erected from a common base that now serves as the headquarters for General Motors. Completed in 1977, the 'Ren Cen' was

intended to revitalize Detroit; the project was described as a 'city within a city' and quite effectively lives up to this description. The building, one of several modernist revitalization projects in Detroit, was designed to create secure inner spaces that could house offices, a hotel, restaurants, bars, shopping, a movie theatre, etc. The lower levels of the building are essentially a shopping mall cut off from the city streets that surround it. Suburban workers in the office towers need not even set foot on the streets of Detroit, driving into secure parking lots for work, lunch and shopping within the center, and driving directly out on the interstate network conveniently connected to the downtown core. The entire structure serves to protect the patrons of the building from the hostile environment of Detroit proper.

An earlier revitalization effort occurred at the height of the post-war emigration from the city in 1955 in an effort to "...renovate one of the city's 'failing' downtown neighborhoods"¹⁴; the Black Bottom neighbourhood (a predominantly African American neighbourhood named for its dark topsoil), which was considered by developers to be a blighted slum. The project came to be known as 'Lafayette Park' and employed the professional services of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as designer, with substantial funding from the Federal Housing Act (FHA). The project employed an interdisciplinary team and "...offers a unique case study in a continuously viable and vibrant mixed income community occupying a modernist super-block scheme."¹⁵ The complex is a collection of one and two-story townhomes, some low rise apartment buildings, a

¹⁴ Waldheim, "Motor City," 58.

¹⁵ Waldheim, "Motor City," 59.

small neighborhood shopping center known as 'Towers Plaza,' and five high-rises adjacent to a 18-acre municipally-operated park. The central visions of the project (as described by Waldheim) aimed to:

...provide central city housing to a middle class group of residents with the perceived amenities of the suburbs, including decreased density, extensive landscaping and public parks, easy access by automobile, and safe secure places for children to play.¹⁶



Figure 5 *Lafayette Park Townhomes*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

This residential project, designed as an inner city suburb (or suburb within the city) is now heavily patrolled by private security guards in order to protect residents from the surrounding Detroit neighbourhoods. The design “...positioned landscape as the central amenity in the form of an 18-acre park

¹⁶ Waldheim, 59.

bisecting the site and providing a much sought after social and environmental amenity in the midst of Detroit.”¹⁷

It should be granted that the townhomes in Lafayette Park are unmistakably beautiful, although quite expensive by Detroit standards,¹⁸ and the neighbourhood today is quite secure and vibrant. However, we should also note the fate of the Black Bottom neighbourhood that was sacrificed to create this modernist marvel of urban renewal along with Interstate 75 (I-75) which cuts across the former neighbourhood. Black Bottom, while run down and in need of physical repair, was culturally quite lively, with a number of African American-owned business, social institutions and night clubs (where famous Blues, Big Band, and Jazz artists such as Duke Ellington, Billy Eckstine, Pearl Bailey, Ella Fitzgerald, and Count Basie regularly performed). These businesses and residences were expropriated to make way for the redevelopment project. Most residents were moved to various housing projects like Brewster-Douglass and Jeffries Housing Projects (designed for the ‘working poor’). The Brewster-Douglass project famously home to Diana Ross, became overrun by crime, and was redeveloped as low income housing a number of times, only to be closed down completely in 2008 and demolished by 2014. Though much of the Jefferies

¹⁷ Waldheim, 59.

¹⁸ One townhome unit recently listed for \$279K. See Robin Runyan, “Mies van der Rohe Townhouse Hits Market for \$279K: *Create your own mid-century modern masterpiece*,” *Curbed Detroit*, May 9, 2016, Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://detroit.curbed.com/2016/3/9/11185876/mies-van-der-rohe-townhouse-for-sale-mid-century-modern>

Also note: “HOA fees (including master mortgage, property taxes, maintenance, security, water, cable and internet, window washing, co-op insurance, management company fees, audit fees, snow removal, trash pick-up, and recycling service) are \$841/month.”

Housing Project's structures have been demolished for similar reasons, 180 units still remain as a mixture of public housing and housing marketed as "affordable".

Today in Detroit, the growing problem of food insecurity has gained much media attention. This phenomenon, known popularly as a 'food desert' results from a simple sort of corporate logic that any child on Halloween deploys in their trick-or-treat practices. We all knew that the trick for getting the most loot is to go to the high density areas where less walking yields more candy! Major corporations, at least as smart as these children, applying this 'kid-logic' to their competitive models have abandoned the sparsely populated (and largely poverty stricken) city. This corporate abandonment of the city core has left Detroit with somewhere in the ballpark of 84 grocery stores (loosely defined as 'full service'¹⁹) of vastly varying quality and frequently inflated prices given this scarcity. Those Detroiters with the requisite means are able to access some of the major city markets and suburban shopping centers for their need satisfaction, although those without means are largely held immobile due to the lack of public transit. Given that 36.2% of the population of the city lives below the poverty line (figures for 2007-2011)²⁰ and given that the region boasts a per capita income of only

¹⁹ According to the 2008 taskforce findings of the Detroit Fresh Food Access Initiative, a full-service grocery stores is one where fresh foods and healthy options are available for purchase. Note that this definition, as the report notes, does not take quality of the food into account. See: Detroit Fresh Food Access Initiative, *Report of Taskforce Findings August 2008*, Accessed April 20, 2016. https://assets.jhsph.edu/clf/mod_clfResource/doc/Detroit_Fresh_Food_Access_Initiative_report.pdf

²⁰ "United States Census Bureau: Quick Facts," Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2622000.html>.

\$15,261 yearly (2011)²¹, the lack of city infrastructure is rightly heralded as a major problem.



Figure 6 *Whole Foods Market Midtown*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

The corporate response to the media attention generated around this issue was swift, and was constituted by the establishment of a Whole Foods location on Woodward Ave. in Midtown, Detroit. We should note, however, that Midtown is an area of Detroit anchored by the Wayne State University campus,²² the Detroit Institute of the Arts, and is the recipient of most of the development

²¹ "United States Census Bureau: Quick Facts," Accessed April 20, 2016.

²² Much could be written on the disposition of Wayne State University to the city of Detroit. Here it is worthwhile to note that the University has one of the largest, most extensive, High-Tec, and expensive campus police departments in North America and has taken over policing duties not only on-campus, but in the greater midtown area as well. Wayne State Campus Police Officers are commissioned with full police authority in Detroit and are seen by the university as a necessary and vital service if the university to create "...a place where everyone can live, learn, work, and experience all that Detroit has to offer without worry." See Wayne State University, "Wayne State University: Campus Safety," Accessed April 20, 2016. <https://wayne.edu/safety/>.

dollars devoted to the city. Having shopped at this Whole Foods, having encountered the rather high prices, and having encountered the security guards standing at the front door of the store, it is clear that this grocery store is not intended for the residents of the city at large. The store's location, economic disposition, and defense measures demonstrate a disposition to Detroit reminiscent of previous modernist revitalization efforts.

In the context of food insecurity we might draw a comparison between the fortified Whole Foods location and the 150 year old Detroit institution of Eastern Market: "...a 4.5-acre celebration of the freshest, most wholesome fruits, vegetables, specialty foods, art and music, all undeniably Detroit."²³



Figure 7 *Eastern Market Mural*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

²³ "Eastern Market" Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://www.easternmarket.com/>.

The Saturday market runs year round housed in shed structures, but spring through fall it spills out onto the streets and is held on Tuesdays and Sundays as well. In full swing the market is held in festival fashion as a celebration of food and culture in a context of food shortage in the neighbourhoods of Detroit.



Figure 8 *Eastern Market Shed 2. Detroit, MI. August 23, 2013. Photo Credit: Jennifer Willet.*

All are welcome, “All ages, ethnicities and income levels...”²⁴ from all over the greater region. The vendors range from local businesses, to farmers, to urban agriculturalists and activists. Much of the income produced by urban agricultural movements in Detroit is garnered through participation in this

²⁴ “Eastern Market” Accessed April 20, 2016.

festival/market. This institution genuinely expresses a disposition of support for the cultural underpinnings of Detroit, while welcoming and nourishing (to the extent that one institution can) all of Detroit. Though much younger and smaller, the Windsor Downtown Farmers Market²⁵ works with artists, urban agriculturalists, local small business start-ups, and activists who are attempting to achieve for Windsor what Eastern Market achieves for Detroit.

What the 'RenCen', Lafayette Park, and the Midtown Whole Foods share are common dispositions to Detroit that would insulate the economically privileged middle and upper classes from the 'undesirables' who are statistically the majority of Detroit residents. All three projects inhabit the physical geography of Detroit, but take great pains not to engage with it. Instead they insulate themselves from Detroit and most Detroiters, imposing a model of modernist urbanism directed exclusively towards an economically prosperous and now quite mobile middle class. Like the neighbourhood formerly known as Black Bottom, there are many neglected vibrant communities and culturally rooted collectives in the neighbourhoods surrounding the secured and developed city core. Though poor in terms of economic capital, these collectives and communities are rich in cultural capital, which, according to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "...embody the ontological condition not only of resistance but also of productive life itself."²⁶

²⁵ Windsor Essex Economic Development, "Windsor Essex, Grown Right Here: Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market," Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://www.welookforlocal.ca/node/35>. "...a not-for-profit, volunteer-run organization that connects residents of Windsor and surrounding areas to the farmers of Essex County by providing residents with local, fresh and in-season food in an accessible setting."

²⁶ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 133.

The claim by Herron that “this city is never coming back; whatever happens next will be without urban precedent...”²⁷ opens up grounds for reflection that can project new forms of urban configuration and habitation which revitalization efforts like Lafayette Park, the ‘RenCen’, and the ongoing development in the downtown core and midtown dispose themselves to in diffident ways. While mammoth legacy projects present themselves as attempts to revitalize the city, in reality they attempt to hermetically seal themselves off from the cultural basis that generates our unmistakable sense of Detroit. Detroit has become known for abandonment, urban blight, social unrest, arson, murder, political corruption, and economic collapse. Detroit is also well known as a vibrant culture – one responsible for Jazz, Motown, Detroit techno, and most importantly, forms of innovative urban collaborative mutual support unprecedented in North America. Likewise, Windsor is known for unemployment, crime, strip clubs, and has been heralded as “the earth’s rectum” and “the worst place on earth.”²⁸ Yet a closer look at the community in Windsor reveals a friendly and supportive activist community engaged in reimagining what it means to live in an urban context that is of necessity not defined in terms of automotive manufacturing. These massive industrial institutions at their height may have defined and configured the urban landscapes and subjectivities of Detroiters and Windsorites, and established calcified dispositions to official city policies on both sides of the river. However, if there is a way forward through the vacuum left by

²⁷ Jerry Herron, “The Forgetting Machine: Notes Toward a History of Detroit”, *Places*, January 2012, Accessed April 21, 2016. <https://placesjournal.org/article/the-forgetting-machine-notes-toward-a-history-of-detroit/>.

²⁸ Again, see: Serapio, “Colbert attack on ‘Earth’s rectum’ Windsor extends to Winnipeg, CBC,” *CBC News Windsor*..

the decline of these institutions, it must involve a substantial shift in policies and, even more essentially, substantive revaluations of values and reconfiguring of subjectivity.

Urban economist and theorist, Jane Jacobs, with her 1961 publication of *The Death and Life of American Cities*, has wielded significant influence over contemporary urban designers, planners and architects through her theories based on empirical evidence, data analysis and rigorous observation of city life. Throughout this work Jacobs illustrates that "...cities require an informal public life underlying them, mediating between them and the privacy of the people of the city."²⁹ The focus of this work is decisively on neighbourhoods and the informal structures and networks that make a city, its streets, its parks, and general urban function socially in a manner that is both safe and appealing to residents and visitors alike. Her assessment of what makes a city function in this manner is explicitly diffident to urban design and revitalization efforts like Lafayette Park and the 'RenCen'; developments she describes as a "...kind of large-scale, bulldozing government intervention in city planning associated with Robert Moses and with federal slum-clearing projects..."³⁰ Rather, as asserted in the biography of Jacobs at the start of the 25th anniversary edition of her seminal work, "...Jacobs proposed a renewal from the ground up, emphasizing mixed use rather than exclusively residential or commercial districts, and drawing on human vitality of existing neighborhoods..."³¹

²⁹ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, (New York : Modern Library, 2011), 75.

³⁰ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, V.

³¹ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, VI.

Jacobs visualized cities as being analogous to living organisms or even ecosystems. The job of the city planner is like that of a gardener: to build structures that support and nurture the human and cultural vitality already present in an urban context. The exploration of the potential of the informal public life within a city to be activated politically provided by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their books: *Empire*, *Multitude*, and *Commonwealth* does much to supplement the account by Jacobs. The notion of a multitude of singularities that self-organize in terms of networked cultural and political action on the basis of what they call the 'common' edifies much of the unexplored latent activist nature of Jacobs' account of city life. These notions also find expression in the writings of the Detroit philosopher and activist Grace Lee Boggs, who sees in the devastated landscape of Detroit neighbourhoods the potential for a revolution of social structures, subjectivities, sensibilities, and education.

To be sure, activist activity in Detroit is punctuated by issues stemming from a history of racial conflict within the city. Grace Lee Boggs herself first cut her teeth in activist practice through her involvement with the Black Power movement. It is, however, not the task of this work to provide an analysis of the history of race and inequality in the context of Detroit since this has already been written about extensively. Rather, a novel focus of this project is to provide a model for the psychological and spiritual dispositions as well as the creative practices necessary to engage in effective urban community oriented activist practice in the context of deindustrializing 'rust belt' cities. This includes Windsor where the tensions that occasion activism and acts of resistance differ

significantly from that of Detroit. This is not to discount the importance of the analysis of racial inequality. The question of race looms ubiquitously behind assessments of urban planning, economics, education, and more generally social justice as they pertain to Detroit. It is understandable, then, that much has been written on racial inequality as it pertains to the historical urban landscape of Detroit. Two publications in particular stand out pertaining to this issue as it relates to urban social theory: *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality In Postwar Detroit*³² and *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*³³

The first is written historically from the perspective of social theory: *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* draws upon the history of workplaces, unions, civil rights groups, political organizations, and real estate agencies in order to reveal that “[discrimination] by race was a central fact of life in the postwar city.”³⁴ This publication offers an excellent “...social and political history of inequality in a twentieth-century city...” that reveals how Detroit residents who “...have little access to political power survive, resist, adapt, and gain access to power...”³⁵

The second is written from a planning perspective: *Redevelopment and Race*, by June Manning Thomas provides a well-conceived and well-executed assessment of urban planning in Detroit. Her analysis spans from the 1940's to the early 1990's. This analysis tries to answer the question; “How could a city

³² Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins Of The Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³³ June Manning Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race: Planning A Finer City In Postwar Detroit*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013).

³⁴ Sugrue, *The Origins Of The Urban Crisis*, 8.

³⁵ Sugrue, *The Origins Of The Urban Crisis*, 14.

that for so long enjoyed prosperity turn into what exists today, given that so many people tried, for so many years to improve it?"³⁶ Ultimately her analysis

concludes with two prescriptions:

First, the profession of planning offers valuable skills needed to improve cities, but it will have to become a different kind of planning, one characterized by social equity, participatory strength, and tools appropriate for the challenges of today. Second, urban problem-solving requires that society develop more deliberate methods to overcome the barriers built by the ongoing effects of racial prejudice, discrimination, and disunity. Not until then will better cities be possible.³⁷

These two publications would be highly valuable to theorists and practitioners interested in the urban history of racial inequality in Detroit as it pertains to activist practice.

While acknowledging the realities of racial conflict in Detroit, I adopt a position heavily influenced by Hardt and Negri, a position explicitly taken up by Grace Lee Boggs. This position, which will be developed in the first chapter, is one that stresses inclusivity with regard to activist struggle rather than couching activist critique within divisive categories like race, gender, etc.; categories that tend in their application to essentialize identities and crystalize political and cultural action along identitarian lines. Following Nietzsche's genealogical critique of moral values offered in the first essay of *On The Genealogy of Morals*, it is important to avoid "...the dangerous internalization and intensification of... value-oppositions... [that can] ...open chasms between man and man..." (GM I 6) Such chasms, with dividing lines drawn in terms of 'us' and 'them' oppositions (including Detroiters than thou dispositions) have the capacity to close off, rather than open up potential for dialogue and collaboration. Moreover, in my

³⁶ Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race*, 1.

³⁷ Thomas, *Redevelopment and Race*, 10.

experience meeting, discussing, and volunteering with activist organizations and leaders, many of whom I discuss in the third and fourth chapters below, an inclusive and collaborative model for activist practice proves to be the governing modality employed by these organizations.³⁸

A fundamental aspect of the urban structure relied upon by both Jacobs' system of inquiry and presented in the works of Hardt and Negri is a phenomenological understanding of a city as portrayed through narrative and myth. However, though implied throughout their works, this theme remains insufficiently explored. This represents a significant gap in theory that will be filled productively in this work through the critical and prescriptive force arising from the works of Nietzsche. In Nietzsche, we find a critique rooted in a distinction between healthy or vital dispositions that culminates in the avocation of a passionate engagement with life, experimentation, and an understanding of agency that binds the expression of human freedom to the challenges presented by the harsh necessities of life – in this case, the extreme harshness of urban life in the transitional deindustrializing cities of Windsor and Detroit.

Heavily represented and transitioning cities, specifically ones with the media profiles of Windsor and Detroit, can generate narrative and mythic impressions that impinge upon our presuppositions about these places in a way that can stifle and frustrate potential for the cultural vitality discussed by Jacobs,

³⁸ It is interesting to note that issues related to racial conflict as it pertains to this project tend to arise most vehemently when discussing this work in an academic context and are generally not raised by boots-on-the-ground activists. This is not to essentialize the position of 'boots-on-the-ground activists' in any way. I only mean to assert that the framework applied by Grace Lee Boggs developed with reference to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri more closely resembles the activist practice at work in Detroit and Windsor than one that draws on racial distinctions while at the same time allowing for forms of collective solidarity across identity categories.

Hardt, and Negri. Addressing the structures of power that generate and maintain these potentially destructive and stifling impressions and presuppositions will be the subject of the first chapter. The accounts of the dynamics that bring out these presuppositions offered by Jacobs, Hardt and Negri can be only partially effective in this respect, since these presuppositions manifest themselves in terms of dispositions that are reinforced by mass media representations, the academic interpretations of the history of a place, and by the informal intergenerational cultural education fostered as part of our upbringing.³⁹

Although the position offered by Jacobs is revolutionary in its claim that city vitality cannot be achieved by "...the plans of planners alone, and the designs of designers alone..."⁴⁰ she attempts to confront the principles of classical urban design (which she bluntly asserts are wrong headed and forms of "...anti-city planning..."⁴¹) with the weight of her common sense. This ignores the vast amount of psychological and cultural sediment that produces momentum toward established cultural practices. Although Hardt and Negri provide an extremely

³⁹ For example, my father lived in Windsor during the 1967 race rebellion in Detroit. The 12th street riot (or rebellion) was a social disturbance that lasted five days, killed 43 people, injured 1189, looted or burned 2,509 stores, rendered 388 families homeless or displaced and burned or damaged 412 buildings enough to be demolished. After this event my father never quite trusted Detroit again. Growing up in his house involved the inheritance of a number of presuppositions and dispositions passing down an extreme aversion to Detroit. Since Detroit is the largest city close to Windsor, it was frequently necessary to visit, though such visits were always resisted to the extent possible. My father instituted a number of fear-based procedures that governed our infrequent encounters with this metropolis. For example, the rules for driving in Detroit included locked doors, windows rolled up, and eyes front at all times. I was prohibited from making eye contact with anyone on the streets or in other vehicles. Though in my teens I paid very little practical heed to my father's aversion to Detroit, still my trips across the border would always be attended with some measure of inherited fear. My case, I am sure, is not unique. Even long time Detroiters inherit dispositions and presuppositions to their city in this manner (though with content differing from that passed on to me by my father), as do long time Windsorites with regard to their sense of Windsor.

⁴⁰ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 19-20.

⁴¹ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 29.

valuable taxonomy and genealogy of resistance movements within the context of a networked global bio-political power structure, they tend to focus their analysis upon the revolutionary potencies present within the networked interests of a multitude of singularities. This extremely valuable work takes up a perspective that does not directly address the lived and psychological experience of the boots-on-the-ground activist. It should be clear that I myself am not immune to these forces. Accordingly, throughout my analysis I will be explicitly situating myself personally in relation to the analysis offered in an effort to work through the forces that constitute my own relational perspective.

Ultimately, if any theorist or activist engaging with troubled cities like Windsor and Detroit hopes to overcome the sediment that arises from sources such as media culture, history, and upbringing, then some degree of the agency and self-mastery like that advocated by Nietzsche is vital to support the cultivation of activist social forces discussed by Jacobs, Hardt, and Negri. To this end the second chapter will develop an activist interpretation of the account of agency offered by Nietzsche. I will argue that Nietzsche advocates a disposition of epistemic, cultural, political, ethical, and self-*insurgency* with regard to the structures and systems that we of necessity inhabit and embody through our experimental engagement with life. Frequently, Nietzsche productively oscillates in his accounts of agency between "...a man, a people, a culture..." (UM II 1). This oscillation, along with Nietzsche's accounts of agency and *insurgent* dispositions will be further developed in the third and fourth chapters. The third chapter will involve an examination of embedded activist organizations and

collectives engaged in social experiments that reimagine and revalue notions of urban life within Windsor and Detroit. The fourth chapter will address counter-*insurgent* and stifling structures that block the expression of cultural vitality.

Focusing on these specific cities runs the risk of particularizing this investigation by presenting the struggles at work here as unique to the crisis-context of this region. It may be the case that in cities like Windsor and Detroit many of the positions taken by the institutions we examine reveal themselves to be most absurd and most in conflict with the furtherance and preservation of life and the overall health of the culture. Nevertheless, the activist and *insurgent* disposition advocated by Nietzsche applies generally to culture with regard to its dealings with the power structures of economy and politics. This specific crisis-context clearly reveals the denial of life and dismissal of cultural vitality that are at work as these power structures express their interests in terms of policy and projects, although the point of crisis is merely a revelatory moment. These cities reveal a strongly drawn tension between cultural forces attempting to revalue and reinvent the urban landscape in a way that meets the needs of residents and allowing their creative and human capacities to be expressed; versus those political and economic institutions that are stakeholders with interests in maintaining conditions debilitating to residents of these cities and which are, thus, resistant to social change. There are, as we will see, many who resist this experimentation and reinvention. As Nietzsche, in his *Genealogy of Morals*, notes (of a reversal of 'bad conscience'):

An attempt at a reversal would *in itself* be possible – but who is strong enough to undertake it? – that is, an attempt instead to interweave bad conscience with the *unnatural* inclinations, all those aspirations to the beyond, the absurd, the anti-instinctual,

the anti-animal, in short, to what have up to now been regarded as ideals, ideals which are all hostile to life, ideals which defame the world. To whom can one turn today with *such* hopes and demands? ... The good men are the very people who would oppose it; as would, of course, the comfortable, the reconciled, the vain, the sentimentally effusive, the exhausted men... (GM II 24)

This work explores that fine moment where culture and politics meet at street level in the transitional deindustrializing cities of Windsor and Detroit – a moment that should be philosophically articulated. This is a difficult moment to articulate, since many of the criticisms and prescriptions at work in the particular projects that we will examine are expressed as action as performed critique, rather than expressed in terms of discursive mission statements or manifestos. The critiques and prescriptions are inherent in actions and often not explicitly formulated as arguments. The task of this work – an academic work – is to perform the traditional philosophical task of making what is implicit explicit in a non-traditional way through a necessarily incomplete treatment of the social and cultural forces that struggle to find expression in these deindustrializing cities. Nietzsche is an iconoclastic philosopher who, in his later work *Beyond Good and Evil*, forecasts “...a new category of philosopher... on the rise...” (BGE 42) The new dispositions and practices embodied by Nietzsche’s new category of philosopher assert from the standpoint of culture expressions of political power, thus overcoming the shortcomings of “...philosophical workers...” (BGE 211) who we should consider to be merely argument technicians or analysts. Like the interdisciplinary disposition necessary to engage with the tightly knotted web of cultural, political, and economic dynamisms at work within any city, let alone cities in massive states of transition into who-knows-what like Windsor and Detroit, within the new philosopher presented by Nietzsche we find the required

capacity to "...traverse the range of human values and value-feelings and *be able* to look with many kinds of eyes and consciences from the heights into every distance, from the depths into every height, from the corners into every wide expanse." (BGE 211) In order to account for the mechanism by which the new category of philosopher is able to assert a form of agency over their values, value-feelings, and overcome affective presuppositions imbued by media, education, as well as informal intergenerational cultural education fostered as part of our upbringing (like those addressed above as imbued by my father's disposition to Detroit) I will expand John Richardson's account of "...three principal phases or stages..." that layer historically to produce what he calls "... (full Nietzschean) freedom."⁴² The final phase identified by Richardson, "Self-genealogy..."⁴³, introduces the capacity for "...agency to redesign itself..."⁴⁴ Through Richardson's introduction of this capacity; a largely meta-reflective capacity; does not sufficiently account for practice and experimentation. His account of self-genealogy (along with the other two historically layered phases) arms the philosopher/ activist/ critic with the means to perform the *self-insurgent* actions necessary to bring about the dispositions to vitally engage in the self-creation necessary to bring about unprecedented visions for the future of urban life.

The cities in question, it seems, will not 'come back' or 'rise from the ashes' in a manner that will resemble their previous and now antiquated forms.

⁴² John Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms" in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, K. Gemes and S. May (eds.), (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), 132.

⁴³ Richardson "Nietzsche's Freedoms", 145.

⁴⁴ Richardson "Nietzsche's Freedoms", 146.

There are, however, active cultural forces at work in both Windsor and Detroit that Grace Lee Boggs, in her last published work: *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century*, addresses with hope. She writes:

In these desperate times, we must come together as inventors and discoverers committed to creating ideas and practice, vision and projects to help heal civilization. As I approach my ninety-seventh birthday with seven decades of movement activism behind me, I remain filled with hope that a better future is within our grasp. My ongoing work in Detroit and encounters with people from all over the world engaged in visionary organizing continue to provide me with assurance that we have the power within ourselves to create the world anew.⁴⁵

This is not a matter of rising, falling, and rising again in a manner that rekindles our old way of life. Rather, the forces pointed to by Boggs are inventing, discovering, fashioning through creative practice an unprecedented vision for the future of the city. Jacobs envisions the job of the city planner to be akin to that of a gardener, building city structures that support and nurture the human and cultural vitality already present in an urban context. Yet it is also the job of these urban activists and insurgents to build corresponding social and psychic dispositional structures that support, nurture, and encourage cultural vitality aimed toward creating *something new and without precedent*.

⁴⁵ Grace Lee Boggs, *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable activism for the twenty-first century*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), xxiii.

Chapter 1: What Do Places Demand?

Reflections on Fear, Engagement, and the Latent Capacities of De-Industrializing Cities

In the summer of 2014 I borrowed an apartment in Detroit from some colleagues, setting up an informal writing residency. I realized the importance of bridging the gap between my theoretical and academic understanding of the cultural movements in Detroit and the lived experience that comes with habitation. What I was not expecting from this informal residency was the fear I experienced. I had been thinking abstractly about social and cultural movements in Detroit for so long that I had developed a deep respect for the residents of this city in light of their mammoth and sustained struggles within a system of abuse but I did not fully recognize the effects of the myth of Detroit on my own pre-reflective consciousness. Reflectively I had come to understand the cultural, political, and economic underpinnings of the struggles that Detroit residents engage with in their lives daily. I trenchantly hold that Detroiters (and Windsorites) are generally good people that suffer bad systems and circumstances. At some level, however, the stories of crime and violence that I had heard almost daily for better than thirty years had collected like sediment to produce the affect of fear in dissonance with my reflective understanding and practical goals for my period of residency. Reflectively I tend to dismiss these stories as sensationalistic and alarmist. The feeling in the pit of my stomach seemed to dispute this.

Upon taking up residence in my borrowed apartment in Midtown (one of the most developed and stable areas of the city, grounded by the Wayne State

campus and the beneficiary of most of the development dollars directed toward the city), timidly I huddled behind the double-locked door of the flat within the secure building attempting to dare myself to venture out.



Figure 1.1 *View From Borrowed Apartment, Hendrie Street, Midtown (Background: Fisher Body Plant).* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

I tried to find comfort in my old stripe of friends: books. Unfortunately, the first representative of this old stripe of friend that I picked up was *Detroit: An American Autopsy* by Charlie LeDuff (a partial work of fiction by a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist returned ex-pat of the city). Stuffed full of stories of danger, crime, murder, systematic forms of injustice and racism, his book highlights the horror of the structural inequities and general *atopic* nature of this de-industrializing city. This only served to heighten my fear of this place and its residents whom I respect deeply yet do not trust.

The reference to trust is a reference to Le Duff who relays a story about his niece as an implied metonym⁴⁶ for Detroit:

Life in Detroit had gotten tough.

Everyone was broke and if they weren't out of work, they were half out of work. One of my brothers pulled his tooth out with a pair of pliers because he had no dental insurance and was too proud to ask for the loan.

And then there was my niece. I loved her - loved her hard - but I didn't trust her.⁴⁷

This is a haunting passage considering the suicide of his niece, but an apt reflection. We have to begin to develop an understanding that the residents of Detroit have been failed by the systems that have been put in place to serve them. From systems of infrastructure (roads, lighting, sewage, etc.), to safety systems (police, fire, etc.), political and justice systems (courts, representative and effective democratic governance), to the economic systems that should, through engagement and work, afford residents the opportunity to satisfy their own needs through their own agency; all of these systems are either teetering at the point of collapse or have become so corrupt that they cannot help but fail to produce their intended ends.

Since the 1950`s the population base (and thus the residential tax base) of Detroit has been cut by more than half, leaving large swaths of the city abandoned both residentially and commercially. Roads are crumbling; the aged power and sewage grids have fallen into disrepair, failing often. Unemployment is extremely high, well above both national and state averages. The former mayor of Detroit is in prison on corruption charges.⁴⁸ The city itself, due to a

⁴⁶ A metonym is a simple and common substitution of a complex thing with a simpler, easily recognized equivalent.

⁴⁷ Charlie LeDuff, *Detroit: An American Autopsy*, (New York: Penguin, 2013), 30.

⁴⁸ See Yesha Callahan, "Kwame Kilpatrick, former Detroit mayor, sentenced to 28 years in prison for corruption," *Clutch News*, October 10, 2013, Accessed August 12, 2016.

legacy debt load of roughly *eighteen billion dollars*, has just been through the largest municipal bankruptcy case in US history.⁴⁹ It was only possible for Detroit to exit bankruptcy by slashing deeply the pensions of retired city employees. Those long-time residents of the city that remain, abandoned by their neighbours and betrayed by their failing institutions, now rely on their own power and agency for survival, need satisfaction, and even a particular stripe of almost frontier-like justice.

This whole ad hoc cultural system in place in many neighbourhoods in Detroit seems all but unreadable to the non-Detroiter. It is, however, a necessary and pragmatic emergent property which makes sense to someone acclimatized to this cultural environment. In a sense, the context of a city like Detroit both confirms the description offered by Hobbes about what happens in the absence of institutions that provide safety and security and denies the extreme thought experiment of the state of nature.⁵⁰ Many residents do not have an institution to ensure their safety and security, but rather than falling into a state of 'war as is of everyone against everyone,' many residents of Detroit engage with networks of

<http://www.clutchmagonline.com/2013/10/kwame-kilpatrick-former-detroit-mayor-sentenced-28-years-prison-corruption/>

⁴⁹ See: Ashley Woods, "A Guide To Detroit's Chapter 9 Default And How Bankruptcy Could Change The City," *Huffington Post*, July 24, 2013, Accessed August 12, 2016.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/24/detroit-bankruptcy-chapter-9_n_3640734.html

⁵⁰ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (London : Penguin Books, 1985), 185.: "Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man." Here Hobbes' argument rests on an account of human nature by which we are at root self interested creatures. He hypothesises in this thought experiment that in our natural condition (without institutions wielding sufficient power to keep our desires in check) that our "...perpetuall and restlesse desire for Power after power, that ceaseth onely in Death" (Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 161.) will inevitably lead us into a state of conflict with one another. Cooperative community movements within Detroit would seem to call into question this inference insofar as, in the absence of the safety and security ideally provided by these institutions, rather than continual war and distrust of one another, networks of mutual support have emerged organically in response to collective needs.

mutual interdependent support that have emerged cooperatively. My own issue in taking up a temporary residence in Detroit was primarily that I was initially illiterate with regard to the workings of this cultural system. I didn't know what to expect. My guard was up.

I rarely ever feel this kind of fear in my own home-town, only sixteen minutes away across the river in Canada, although there is evidence that I should. Also a de-industrializing city, Windsor boasts a fairly high unemployment rate since the economic downturn of 2008, accompanied by the expected and palpable increase in theft and violent crime. Windsor frequently sports the statistically highest unemployment rates in Canada.⁵¹ Given this, it is understandable why tensions run high. Just the day before starting my residency I saw a fellow exit the rental duplex across the street from my home in Windsor only to return minutes later and begin violently beating on the windows and doors of that flat. Not knowing what was going on and remembering Jane Jacobs' case for 'eyes on the street' in her *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, I decided to shout across the street (summoning my best 'professor authority' voice) "Is there a problem?" He replied "Is there a problem? Yes there is a F***ing problem. Mind your own business or I'll kick your F***ing teeth in!" He quickly moved on after this. Windsor, in many ways, is becoming a Canadian microcosm of Detroit, largely through a form of cultural cross-contamination. Windsor and Detroit share the busiest international border crossing in North America, which draws a great deal of drug related crime to the city.

⁵¹ See, for example, Craig Pearson, "Windsor again No. 1 with unemployment, but it's worse than that," *The Windsor Star*, February 6, 2015, accessed May 9, 2016. <http://windsorstar.com/news/windsor-again-no-1-with-unemployment-but-its-worse-than-that>.



Figure 1.2 *My Street*. Windsor, ON. May 27, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

Even though the international border is nowhere near as porous as it was before the incidents of 9/11, still Windsor is influenced to a high degree by our much larger neighbour oddly to the North, and has formed its identity in terms of and in opposition to Detroit. What is culturally prevalent in Detroit frequently finds its way over to Windsor and, to a lesser degree, vice versa.⁵² The difference between my experience of these two related, interconnected, and somewhat similar cities is, as I note above, a matter of cultural literacy. I can read the signs and signifiers in my city. I do not experience the generalized fear of Windsor that

⁵² It should be noted that the murder rate in Windsor is unusually low given its proximity to Detroit. See: Dalson Chen, "A tale of two cities: Windsor and Detroit murder rates show stark contrast," *The Windsor Star*, December 4, 2012, Accessed May 9, 2016. <http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/a-tale-of-two-cities-windsor-and-detroit-murder-rates-show-stark-contrast>.

I found in Detroit since the context of Windsor is intimately familiar. I cannot read Detroit in the same way.

Nietzsche, in his *Untimely Meditations*, notes:

...a living thing can be healthy, strong, and fruitful only within a defined horizon; if it is incapable of drawing a horizon around itself and at the same time too self-centred to enclose its own view within that of another, it will pine away slowly or hasten to its timely end. (UM II 3)

In this work, Nietzsche argues that the nature of this horizon that we draw around ourselves is determined by our plastic power (UM II 3).⁵³ Thus, Nietzsche identifies in this early work a certain limit to which history and culture can be appropriated by an individual or a culture discussed in terms of power and health. His goal in this section is to identify three "...species of history..." (UM II 2) or three ways that history can be appropriated in the service of life. Nietzsche distinguishes "...between a *monumental*, an *antiquarian* and a *critical* species of history." (UM II 2) While a fuller treatment of this work will be developed in the second chapter, it is the second form of history advocated by Nietzsche that is illustrative here. In the clearest passage he offers regarding the development of a sense of place, Nietzsche speaks of what he calls *antiquarian* history, the species of history that preserves and venerates:

The history of his city becomes for him the history of himself; he reads its walls, its towered gate, its rules and regulations, its holidays, like an illuminated diary of his youth and in all this he again finds himself, his force, his industry, his joy, his judgment, his folly and vices. Here we lived, he says to himself, for here we are living; and here we shall live, for we are tough and not to be ruined overnight. Thus with the aid of this 'we' he looks beyond his own individual transitory existence and feels himself to be the spirit of his house, his race, his city. (UM II 3)

⁵³ "...I mean by plastic power the capacity to develop out of oneself in one's own way, to transform and incorporate into oneself what is past and foreign, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recreate broken moulds..." (UM II 1)

This passage from the early work of Nietzsche already demonstrates a typical oscillation between self, place and culture. For Nietzsche, there is no interior reflective notion of a self that maintains the distinction between yourself and your situation so that, effectively, to know yourself you must engage with how you are where you are. For Nietzsche, then, self-knowledge involves identification with the history, culture, struggles, and failures of the places you inhabit: in the current case, the specific de-industrializing cities of Windsor and Detroit. To read the rules of a city, you must engage with the city - you must understand your place in your place. I had done this with my hometown of Windsor, whose projects, strivings, customs, and streets are an extension of my identity. To some extent, though passively familiar, Detroit remained at this starting point the 'Other' across the river which, accordingly, generated the palpable sensation that I was not at home.

This is the first challenge of this project: overcoming the (probably quite justified) fear and distrust that crisis and desperation fosters within a place. My initial and unexpected fear in the context of Detroit illustrates a more general affective phenomenon: mythic understandings related to places can fundamentally colour dispositions to the places we inhabit in ways that can frustrate and resist engagement. In my case, and I am sure my case is not unique, the fear I experienced did not arise from reflective consciousness. Rather, I felt fear in the pit of my stomach. The stories that I and many other Windsorites have grown up with regarding Detroit yield layer after layer of sediment resulting in a powerful un-reflected drive. None of this is to suggest

that Detroiters don't fear Detroit, or that Windsorites don't fear Windsor for that matter, or that the immediate state of the landscape of these cities does not generate an impression in and of itself. In both places there are a number of circumstances in which justified or unjustified fear can arise even with the historical and cultural identification with place that Nietzsche describes as part of his treatment of antiquarian history. Likewise, even without the dubious benefit of a mythic context for these cities their general bearing can certainly bring about an immediate fear. The fear that I and many others experience related to the places in which we reside can be counter-productive both theoretically and practically and, to a great degree, can arise as a result of the cultural myth of a place.

This is a good place to start thinking through the fundamental tensions at work that can allow for, occasion, resist, and frustrate *our* potentially productive ethical and political dispositions rooted in how we are where we are. As we take up residence or write about a place, dispositions of these sorts are frequently present before our feet touch the pavement or ink hits the page. These are *our* dispositions after all. A locked door, barred windows, or gates and fences are woefully poor and inadequate substitutes (ultimately futile if someone has a mind to circumvent them) for real and substantively justified trust and fellowship within our neighbourhoods and cities. We should start with reflection upon the most effective and positive modes of engagement with place (along with that which blocks these modes), since without such engagement we can never truly be at home.

There are at least three issues that must be addressed with respect to the fear discussed in this initial reflection. The *first* is this notion of engagement, the presence of which generates the ineffable pleasant feelings of safety, security and vitality for a neighbourhood; the absence of which generates the inverse. As we shall see, the salient features that generate these ineffable pleasant feelings, that Jacobs argues are essential to city design, rely upon informal networks of mutual support that are able to handle encounters with strangers. Jacobs' position will be supplemented by Hardt and Negri in their treatment of the metropolis in *Commonwealth*. Here they treat the city as the site of the common and provide the basis for an argument that shows that habitation entails more than the brute fact of location. Cities show themselves to be ethical landscapes and city life calls for engagement.

Secondly, the fear partially generated by the myth surrounding cities like Detroit must be addressed. To be sure, a deindustrializing city like Detroit with such obvious infrastructural shortcomings generates an immediate and foreboding impression. All cities, however, generate mythical images and senses of themselves. In Detroit specifically, given the litany of disparaging national news stories, documentaries, and cinema representations of crime, blight, corruption and despair within the city, we frequently experience the myth of this place so palpably that it can fundamentally colour all that we experience over, against and despite all raw experience. For this discussion and for a brief history of Detroit we shall turn to the works of Jerry Herron, John Patrick Leary, the postcolonial treatment of the narrative creation of identity by Edward Said, the

narrative and archival construction of a sense of place by Benjamin Belton and briefly back to Charlie LeDuff. Since any attempt to represent a place (let alone imperiled places like these de-industrializing cities) contributes to an *archive* that generates the sense of that place, it is important to address a fear lurking behind this work with the following question: Who am I to write about these places?

Third and finally, projective sorts of questions must be raised, those relating to our capacities to engage with cities that produce this sort of (sometimes quite justified) fear along with a brief treatment of the institutional and theoretical mechanisms of avoidance and distance that can allow that fear to remain firmly rooted. This line of questioning will rely heavily upon the position offered by Grace Lee and James Boggs as well as some preliminary reflections about the notion of 'Unreal Estate' offered by Andrew Herscher in his *The Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit*. As we noted above with the passage from Nietzsche,⁵⁴ the features and senses of the places that we inhabit become our features and they serve to reveal our dispositions.

1.1 Cities: Engagement

In the preface to the 50th anniversary edition of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs characterizes the city in terms of an analogy with an ecosystem. She describes a natural ecosystem as a complex of "...physical-biological-chemical processes active within a space time unit of any magnitude."⁵⁵ Analogously, she describes a city ecosystem as a complex of "...physical-economic-ethical processes active at a given time within a city and its

⁵⁴ See p. 38 above.

⁵⁵ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, xxvi.

close dependencies."⁵⁶ She devotes a third of the book describing how this notion works itself out in terms of both failed and successful neighbourhoods. Sidewalks and streets are important to Jacobs because they are the sites in which we encounter the stranger and alterity, the sites in which we find neither public nor private use, but rather that which is discussed by Hardt and Negri as 'the common.'⁵⁷ They are the sites that establish the identity of a place. She claims:

The bedrock attribute of a successful city district is that a person must feel personally safe and secure on the street among all these strangers. He must not feel automatically menaced by them. A city district that fails in this respect also does badly in other ways and lays up for itself, and for its city at large, mountain on mountain of trouble.⁵⁸

Much of our impression of a given city is framed in terms of our estimations of its streets and sidewalks where we encounter strangers. The nature and vibrancy of the physical space of sidewalks and streets, therefore, is important both economically and (more importantly) ethically. The vibrancy of our streets and sidewalks constitutes the personality and quality of our shared experience of neighbourhoods. Jacobs advocates three main city design qualities for successful city neighbourhoods:

First, there must be a clear demarcation between what is public space and what is private space. Public and private spaces cannot ooze into each other as they do typically in suburban settings or in projects.

Second, there must be eyes on the street, eyes belonging to those we might call the natural proprietors of the street. The buildings on a street equipped to handle strangers and to insure the safety of both residents and strangers, must be oriented to the street. They cannot turn their backs or blank sides on it and leave it behind.

And third, the sidewalk must have users on it fairly continuously, both to add to the number of effective eyes on the street and to induce the people in buildings along the street to

⁵⁶ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, xxvi.

⁵⁷ This claim will be developed further later, however it is important to note that, while Jacobs relies on the oppositional dyad 'public-private', her arguments ultimately rely upon the notion of a shared hybrid space that is neither public or private that functions only because it is shared and common. This notion is well developed by Hardt and Negri with regard to cities in their *Commonwealth*. See pp. 49-55 below.

⁵⁸ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 38.

watch the sidewalks in sufficient numbers. Nobody enjoys sitting on a stoop or looking out a window at an empty street. Almost nobody does such a thing. Large numbers of people entertain themselves, off and on, by watching street activity.⁵⁹

These city design qualities aim at fostering forms of active engagement with one's surroundings so that the city street can handle strangers. She notes that in smaller cities, the job of defending and ensuring the safety of those on the street can largely be handled by subtle social factors such as reputation and gossip. In larger cities where we find not only local residents, but strangers and visitors as well, the means used must necessarily be more direct. With the first quality (demarcation between public and private space), Jacobs advocates against the forms of ambiguous or atopic space. Such spaces are difficult to read, and thus difficult (even potentially dangerous) to negotiate. As noted in a footnote above, although Jacobs employs a public/ private dichotomy, this dichotomy simply establishes a shared (or common) hybrid space that is the object of this call for safety. Secondly, city design qualities should foster the opportunity and desire for shared engagement with its streets and sidewalks. Buildings and city streets should be architecturally disposed to streets and sidewalks in a way that promote forms of informal community stewardship of the streets. Finally, the uses of the streets themselves should foster this engagement in a sustained manner. Accordingly, Jacobs advocates for an interesting and diverse landscape of mixed use (retail, restaurants and bars, alongside residential) which would garner sufficient interest to place eyes on the street and this, in turn, establishes the ethical landscape in which we live. Failed sidewalk culture is discussed in terms of disuse, danger of criminal culture, and a lack of

⁵⁹ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 44-45.

diversity and vitality. It is this lack of vitality that establishes the conditions for anonymity which yields the opportunity for crime, violence, and other forms of 'unappealing' uses of these central arteries of the common within our neighbourhoods.

It is interesting that although Jacobs focuses her analysis upon design qualities, these features of architecture and urban planning are meant to foster (and depend upon in terms of the justification offered by Jacobs) specific dispositions for engagement with place pertaining to both strangers and locals. The buildings themselves, the streets, and the vibrancy of uses of space within a neighbourhood, by her account, should coalesce to produce dispositions to an ethical engagement with one's location, even if one is a stranger to that place. Neighbourhoods, by this account, are characterized by their emergent ethical properties as a function of this engagement. She states:

It is futile to try to evade the issue of unsafe city streets by attempting to make some other features of a locality, say interior courtyards, or sheltered play spaces, safe instead. By definition again, the streets of a city must do most of the job of handling strangers for this is where strangers come and go. The streets must not only defend the city against predatory strangers, they must protect the many, many peaceable and well-meaning strangers who use them, insuring their safety too as they pass through. Moreover, no normal person can spend his life in some artificial haven, and this includes children. Everyone must use the streets.⁶⁰

A 'good' neighbourhood, then, is one where this network of engaged residents, workers and occupants provides safety and defence for both locals and 'well-meaning' strangers alike. This involves an ethical landscape and forms of engagement that involve everyone, local and stranger alike, and provides for the benefit of everyone. To illustrate this point, in her treatment of sidewalk and street culture, Jacobs describes an incident in which a young girl that she saw on

⁶⁰ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 45-46.

her street was engaged in an altercation with an older man.⁶¹ The man was attempting to get this young girl to leave with him. As Jacobs watched this scene unfold from her window, deliberating about the proper response to this situation, she noticed the array of other eyes that were attracted to this street scene. Local shopkeepers and neighbourhood residents alike immediately directed their gaze to the situation. As it turned out, this man was the girl's father and there was nothing sordid happening, although Jacobs took this incident as a lesson which demonstrates how the shared or common space of a city regulates itself.⁶² Noteworthy to this lesson was the conspicuous lack of eyes directed to the street from the building down the block that had recently been converted to high priced condos. Jacobs reflects that, while the residents of this condo building (whom she refers to as 'birds of passage'⁶³) were attracted to the neighbourhood for its vibrancy and safety (resulting from a shared engagement with space used in common), they do not themselves engage in the activities that make her neighbourhood vibrant or safe.⁶⁴ She states:

A city neighborhood can absorb and protect a substantial number of these birds of passage, as our neighborhood does. But if and when the neighborhood finally becomes them, they will gradually find the streets less secure, they will be vaguely mystified about it, and if things get bad enough they will drift away to another neighborhood which is mysteriously safer.⁶⁵

Thus, while a healthy neighbourhood can allow a good number of such oblivious residents to ride freely, the attracting factors of a neighbourhood that beget these

⁶¹ See Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, pp. 49-51.

⁶² We should note here that Jacobs assumes that 'eyes on the street' are unambiguously productive ethical forces. This represents a weakness in her treatment of cities insofar as her ethical assumptions and judgments tend to be presented as matters of fact. Here I take this case to be merely illustrative of an ethical potential that is still somewhat ambiguous.

⁶³ See Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 51.

⁶⁴ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 49-51.

⁶⁵ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 51.

residents depend on dispositions wholly different from the ones exhibited by them.



Figure 1.3 *Club Lofts Condominiums from Argyle Street. Windsor, ON. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.*

Simply stated, by this account, there exists a valid and practical distinction between the brute fact of location and a disposition that contributes to habitation of a place. In other words, good neighbourhoods depend on numerous engaged residents for their vitality. This, however, is merely the structure of an ethical

landscape: engaged neighbours directing their gaze toward their surroundings asserting themselves as the natural proprietors of their streets are necessary, although this in and of itself is not sufficient to develop a specific normative position.⁶⁶ More needs to be said about the nature of such engagement before we can arrive at normative judgments.

To harken back to the example we began with, that of my altercation with the fellow on my street in Windsor and my fear of Detroit, the two incidents can now be nicely illustrated in terms of Jacobs' discussion of sidewalk culture. In the incident on my own street, the courage to speak up when this fellow began violently beating and kicking at the windows of the rental flat across the street came partially from this sort of engagement with and trust of my neighbourhood. I found myself looking left and right up the street and numbering off in my head the neighbours that I knew would likely be home at that time of day. While running this calculation I happened to notice movement in the windows of at least three neighbours' houses. I was also aware that the police services in Windsor have very quick response times to 911 calls. Compare this to the fairly abandoned city landscape within Detroit, where average police response times to 911 calls are so long (at the time of my residency, about 58 minutes on average⁶⁷) that residents often do not bother to call. While Jacobs has successfully presented the requisite city planning, architectural, and social

⁶⁶ Think, for example, about the potential judgments implicit to the gaze of a street proprietor stemming from racist or classist assumptions. To be sure, the normative content of the gaze must be evaluated, but engaged residents (as opposed to disengaged neutral inhabitants) remain a necessary precondition for neighbourhood stability and vitality.

⁶⁷ See Monica Davie, "Financial Crisis Just a Symptom of Detroit's Woes", *New York Times*, July 8, 2013, Accessed July 18, 2014. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/09/us/financial-crisis-just-a-symptom-of-detroits-woes.html>.

features that must be in place to allow for a thriving, safe, secure, and vibrant neighbourhood, it should be clear that cities like Detroit represent a whole different kettle of fish than the idealized case studies from New York and Chicago upon which her work focuses.

There are two central notions of use for an analysis of Detroit that emerge from reading Jacobs. The first is the notion of a city as a place where we encounter strangers and negotiate that place. As we shall see, this is why Hardt and Negri call the city the site of the common. Secondly, we have seen a distinction emerge between the brute fact of location of a place and habitation involving the sorts of passionately engaged dispositions upon which 'good' neighbourhoods rely. We may characterize this demand for engagement and negotiation of cities the 'call' of the city.

This notion of engagement is not unique to Jacobs' account of cities. It emerges in a compatible manner explicitly from the works of Hardt and Negri and their notion of *the common* (explored in their *Commonwealth*⁶⁸). Engagement also emerges as an important element of the argument offered by Nietzsche (*Human, All Too Human*) in his discussion of the *productive tensions* resting on passionate engagement with the values and "...habitual and undiscussable principles..." (HH I 224) held by a culture that spur on what he calls (somewhat enigmatically) '*spiritual progress*' (HH I 224). Not only is this notion of engagement well-argued ground as represented in the works of these theorists, but I also hope to show by this discussion that figures like Andrew Herscher and

⁶⁸ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 2009).

his treatment of *unreal estate* (*The Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit*⁶⁹) and Richard Florida (See *Who's Your City?*⁷⁰) depend on passionate engagement with one's place, even while failing to acknowledge or (in the case of Florida) advocate such engaged dispositions. The position taken by Florida advocates a disposition to place much like Jacobs' "Birds of Passage" discussed above.⁷¹

Drawing from the reading of Marx offered by Deleuze and Guattari, Hardt and Negri describe the city as "...an inorganic body... the body without organs of the multitude."⁷² This inorganic body serves as both the immediate landscape for the common as well as a biopolitical zone of production. The multitude, for Hardt and Negri, acts as an analogue for the critical and revolutionary capacities of the industrial proletariat in Marx, although the bonds that form the political and revolutionary capacity of the multitude are not as direct as material labour. Hardt and Negri instead describe these bonds in terms of 'immaterial labour' meaning a form of direct or indirect association with capitalism. Of this multitude they state: "The multitude gives the concept of the proletariat its fullest definition as all those who labour and produce under the rule of capital."⁷³ The multitude thus refers to a state of living within the conditions of global capitalism.

Hardt and Negri define the multitude as "...an open expansive network in which all differences can be expressed freely and equally, a network that

⁶⁹ Andrew Herscher, *The Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012).

⁷⁰ See Richard Florida, *Who's Your City?: How the creative economy is making where to live the most important decision of your life*, (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2009).

⁷¹ Again, see Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 51.

⁷² Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 249.

⁷³ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 107.

provides the means of encounter so that we can work and live in common.”⁷⁴

Unlike ‘the people’ or the amorphous mob of the ‘masses’ (each term reducing diversity into a single identity) within the multitude, differences remain salient and the multitude has its own internal communicative and networked organizing structure on the basis of ‘the common.’ They describe the common in much the same way introduced by Jacobs, as a landscape that challenges the oppositional dyad: public versus private. Hardt and Negri advocate the middle ground of the common insofar as it has the shared qualities exemplified by language.

Language works because it is not private and proprietary, not public and centrally administrated. The value of language arises from its shared common use.

Likewise, within a city (they argue in 'De Corpore 2: Metropolis') the common expresses itself in terms of shared experience with a widely diverse population engaged in the ethical negotiation of the use of common space. They claim:

The metropolis... is a place of unpredictable encounters among singularities, with not only those you do not know but also those who come from elsewhere, with different cultures, languages, knowledges, mentalities. Baudelaire, for example, conceives of entering the metropolis as "Bathing in the multitude", ...which elicits the drunkenness of "universal communion" when one gives oneself completely to encounters, "to the unforeseen that arises, the unknown person who passes". Although at first sight the common might seem to conflict or even contradict with multiplicity and encounters of singularities, actually, ...the common in contrast to sameness, is entirely compatible. As Baudelaire demonstrates in the context of the metropolis, the common and unforeseen encounters are mutually necessary.⁷⁵

The city is the site of the common. This notion of the common and the sharing and ethical negotiation of common space by singularities remains ambiguous in the treatment of the city offered by Hardt and Negri, but nonetheless provides the basis for the first movement toward a normative distinction and a set of judgments. The common is a sort of ground phenomenon for this ethical

⁷⁴ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, xiv.

⁷⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 252.

negotiation. An encounter, by the argument offered by Hardt and Negri, acts as the instance of this negotiation. On this point, they claim:

...in the context of economic externalities, the common can be positive or negative: dynamic local cultural circuits in a metropolis are a positive form of the common, whereas pollution, traffic, social conflicts, and the like are negative forms. And similarly encounters can be beneficial or detrimental.⁷⁶

Hardt and Negri ultimately and fairly potently deploy this distinction between beneficial and detrimental encounters with the common as the basis for their criticisms and judgments of institutional and political structures. They further develop and politicize the notion of 'encounter'. In the following passage, Hardt and Negri distinguish between joyful and noxious forms of encounter, arguing for the former on the basis of the potentially productive relationships and communicative capacities produced by joyful encounters that produce the stronger social body. In this manner, the common is established as a powerful normative standard.

The concept of encounter we have used thus far as characteristic of the metropolis, however, is merely passive and spontaneous. In order for the metropolis to be for the multitude what the factory was for the industrial working class, it must be a site not only of encounter but also of organization and politics. This could be a definition of the Greek concept of *polis*: the place where encounters among singularities are organized politically. The great wealth of the metropolis is revealed when the felicitous encounter results in a new production of the common - when, for instance, people communicate their different knowledges, different capacities to form cooperatively *something new* [emphasis mine]. The felicitous encounter, in effect, produces a new social body that is more capable than either of the single bodies was alone. Not every encounter, of course, is a joyful one. The majority of spontaneous encounters with others in the metropolis are conflictive and destructive, producing noxious forms of the common, when your neighbors' noise keeps you up at night or you smell their garbage or, more generally, when the traffic congestion and air pollution of the metropolis degrade the life of all the residents. It is not easy to form with others a new relationship that promotes communication and cooperation, that creates a new, stronger social body and generates a more joyful common life.⁷⁷

Here, Hardt and Negri discuss both potentially productive and detrimental forces emerging from the critical mass and social friction generated by metropolitan life.

⁷⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 253.

⁷⁷ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 254-5.

Forms of social, political, economic, and ethical epiphenomena generated by our encounters on the ground of the common are the forces that potentially attract many to city life. Beneficial encounters allow the common to express itself, whereas detrimental ones block the common. Productively from Hardt and Negri we have isolated both engagement and the common as the substrata and site of ethical/political exchange relating this notion to the elements of shared experience that are felt most clearly within cities.

Cities are active zones of conflict since, much like the factory for the industrial proletariat, cities represent "...the site of hierarchy and exploitation, violence and suffering, fear and pain."⁷⁸ Often the structures of the city itself work against, frustrate, block, and stifle the productive and cooperative networks of the common. These instances provide apt targets for urban resistance and rebellion. Accordingly, Hardt and Negri advocate political organization in order "...to organize antagonisms against the hierarchies and divisions of the metropolis, funnel the hatred and rage against its violence."⁷⁹ In the context of Detroit, we may isolate the examples of standing down-wind from the "Detroit Renewable Power" incinerator or the insufficiency of service from Detroit public transit for the neighbourhoods within the city as 'conflictive and destructive'. These are the sort of encounters that Hardt and Negri would advocate as encounters against which we should organize our antagonisms. Interestingly, isolating these hierarchies and divisions and directing our energy against such noxious encounters has the potential to bring about new forms of the common,

⁷⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 258.

⁷⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 260.

new knowledges and capacities that instantiate themselves as forms of resistance.



Figure 1.4 'Detroit Renewable Power' Incinerator, Midtown. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016.
Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

At the start of my informal residency I had already invested a great deal of theoretical effort to understand the dynamics at work that generate both 'joyful' and 'conflictive and destructive' encounters. Regardless, I was still gripped by a fear of walking down the street, even in midtown Detroit. Jacobs identifies that "...informal public life..."⁸⁰ forms a substrata of a city that brings about many elements of city life related to safety and security. Hardt and Negri argue that these "...informal networks of communication, mobility, employment, exchange, and cooperation..."⁸¹ rest upon the common. Problematically, the effects of the

⁸⁰ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 75.

⁸¹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 254.

myth of Detroit on my own pre-reflective consciousness also belong to the common insofar as the myth, misleading as it may be, rests upon a shared cultural assessment bolstered by networks of communication and cooperation that constitute the substrata of cultural life within the city. Dialogues that contribute to disparaging myths about Detroit⁸² are clearly noxious forms of the common insofar as they effectively "...pose obstacles and destroy or corrupt the common."⁸³

To reiterate, habitation is more than the brute fact of location for Hardt and Negri since it also involves beneficial forms of engagement with this common that allows the common to express itself. At this point, however, the root of the judgment 'beneficial' remains ambiguous. Nonetheless, productively from Hardt and Negri we have isolated both engagement and the common as the substrata and sites of ethical/political exchange relating this notion to the elements of shared experience that are felt most clearly within city space.

So far we have focused generally upon cities. As noted above,⁸⁴ cities in the process of massive transition like Detroit represent radically distinct phenomena and to some degree must be grasped in their particularity. Of late there have been reams of articles, works of theory, literature and photo-essays that attempt to grasp the sensational story of this tragic city. We have already briefly mentioned Charlie LeDuff, whose background in journalism from the NY Times and Detroit News yields a certain flair for sensationalism. In what follows, I hope to be more cautious, acknowledging the realities of danger, desperation,

⁸² As exemplified by LeDuff.

⁸³ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 258.

⁸⁴ See p. 49 above.

conflict and crime while treating the act of representation reflectively. Once I became more acclimatized to Detroit, and thus more able to look past both my fear and the myth of this city, one of the most useful reflections about this place and its residents was quite simple: they are just people trying to live their lives. We should keep that in mind for what follows, given that Detroit is such a storied city where the narrative construction of this place tends toward extreme forms of sensationalism.

1.2 Detroit: The Myth



Figure 1.5 *Michigan Central Station*. Detroit, MI. October 30, 2009. Photo Credit: Jennifer Willet.

To illustrate the impact of narrative and myth with regard to the construction of a sense of place, we should briefly return to LeDuff, who in the

early chapters of his *Detroit: An American Autopsy* describes his reporter fascination with and his return to the city as follows:

Circling back to Detroit was instinct, like a salmon needing to swim upstream because he is genetically encoded to do so. Detroit might be the epicentre, a funhouse mirror and future projection of America. An incredibly depressed city in its death swoon. But it also could be a Candy Land from a reporter's perspective. Decay. Mile after mile of rotten buildings, murder, leftover people. One fucking depressing, dysfunctional big glowing ball of color. One unbelievable story after another. Why not admit it? I am a reporter. A leech. A merchant of misery. Bad things are good for us reporters.⁸⁵

While somewhat admirable for his honesty, LeDuff draws our attention to the thorny issue of representation with regard to a city like Detroit. Anyone who wishes to write about contemporary Detroit faces difficulty even before ink is put to page. The task of representing this city, (a city marred by qualifications like "Riot City" and "Murder Capital"), confronts the fact that 'Detroit' has become a metonym for urban crisis. When Diane Sawyer in 1990, came with *Prime Time Live* to cover Detroit, she began her exposition with the following statement: "We're talking about Detroit—once a symbol of U.S. competitive vitality. And some say still a symbol—a symbol of the future, the first urban domino to fall."⁸⁶ Common photographic representations of Detroit, like those offered by Andrew Moore⁸⁷, Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre⁸⁸, or Dan Austin and Sean Doerr⁸⁹, dramatically paint this city as an empty, blighted, disaster zone.

⁸⁵ LeDuff, *Detroit*, 19.

⁸⁶ Judd Rose, "Detroit's Agony," *Primetime Live*, ABC, November 8, 1990.

⁸⁷ Andrew Moore, *Detroit Disassembled*, New York: Damiani, 2010.

⁸⁸ Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre, *The Ruins of Detroit*, Gerhard Steidl Druckerei und Verlag, 2010.

⁸⁹ Dan Austin and Sean Doerr, *Lost Detroit: Stories Behind the Motor City's Majestic Ruins*, (Charleston: History Press, 2010).



Figure 1.6 Bricktown Graffiti. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

This recent trend in photographic representation of 'rust belt' cities (predominantly Detroit) has been criticized heavily as a form of 'ruin porn'.⁹⁰ This representation of Detroit has been recurring in different forms for over fifty years.⁹¹ To further illustrate this point, a more recent news item from CNN Money sports the title "Detroit: Too broke to bury their dead".⁹²

⁹⁰ See John Patrick Leary, "Detroitism," *Guernica: a Magazine of Art and Politics*, January 15, 2011, Accessed July 20, 2014. <https://www.guernicamag.com/features/leary>, Jennifer Guerra, "Art vs. Ruin Porn," *Michigan Radio*, January 12, 2011, Accessed July 20, 2014. <http://michiganradio.org/post/artpod-art-vs-ruin-porn#stream/0>, Pete Broke, "Photos of Detroit Need to Move Beyond Ruin Porn," *Wired*, June 2012., and David Walsh, "Detroit in Ruins," *World Socialist Web Site*, May 5th. 1997, Accessed July 20, 2014. <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/1997/05/det-m97.html>, for an overview of the specific criticisms. These criticisms include charges that the genera of photography characterized as 'ruin porn' is perpetuated by people who "parachute in to take pictures of Detroit's abandoned landscape" (Guerra), typically excludes representations of those who live next to the ruins, thus abstracting the images from the social/ political/ historical contexts which brought them about (Leary), "...photography that fetishizes urban decay." (Broke), etc.

⁹¹ I might pause to note that an example of 'ruin porn' hangs prominently on my dining room wall. There is an appeal to these representations that has to do with engaging the imagination in collaboration with the past. Images of this sort of beautiful, yet abandoned architecture bring about a feeling of the wastefulness of such abandonment and typically invite the viewer in to

Both in the press and in academic circles there has been much discussion with regard to the ethics and politics of representation specifically with regards to the extreme case of Detroit. With a cautionary tone about the interpretive effects of the act of representing Detroit, John Patrick Leary, in his article "Detroitism," identifies the three dominant modes for representing Detroit employed by boosters and critics of the city. The first is that of metonym, in which Detroit is a rather simple and common substitution of a complex thing with a simpler, easily recognized equivalent. Historically, 'Detroit' has been referred to as an equivalency for the auto industry. More recently, 'Detroit' has become the stand in substitution for urban crisis generally. Second, Leary discusses the Detroit lament, which he notes is "...a more visceral depiction of the city's landscape, and occasionally, though only occasionally, its residents."⁹³ Examples of this mode of representation abound, but consider the headlines of two news articles from 2013:

"Detroit's Bankruptcy: 40% of Street Lights Don't Work, 66% of Ambulances Out of Service" (*Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 2013)⁹⁴

"Bankrupt Detroit: As Many As 50,000 Stray Dogs Roam City In Packs" (*Washington Times*, August 21, 2013)⁹⁵

imagine ways that we could reinvigorate the cultural space in question. As we will see in what follows, however, such reimagining becomes problematic insofar as it treats these 'abandoned' spaces as empty or as blank slates. In the case of Detroit ruins, the city is far from abandoned and (some) actions taken to reinvigorate this space fail to recognize either the history or cultural landscape in place.

⁹² Poppy Harlow, "Detroit: Too broke to bury their dead", *CNN Money*, October 1, 2009, Accessed July 20, 2014. http://money.cnn.com/2009/10/01/news/economy/_morgue/

⁹³ John Patrick Leary, "Detroitism."

⁹⁴ Mike Cherney, "Detroit's Bankruptcy: 40% of Street Lights Don't Work, 66% of Ambulances Out of Service," *Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 2013, Accessed July 20, 2014. <http://blogs.wsj.com/moneybeat/2013/07/18/detroits-bankruptcy-40-of-street-lights-dont-work-66-of-ambulances-out-of-service/>

Finally, the Detroit Utopia is characterized as "...a backlash against the pornographic excess of the Lament and is, at best, an attempt to find a new definition of urban vitality."⁹⁶ This, for example, is the explicit purpose of the 2010 Jonnie Knoxville documentary: "Detroit Lives", in which Knoxville begins the documentary by asserting: "You see a lot of bad stuff in the press about Detroit. I can't believe there's nothing positive here. We came to see what else is going on." The title of this article ("Detroitism") should bring to our recollection Edward Said, and his work *Orientalism*.



Figure 5.7 Storefront Sign, "Detroit -VS- Everybody," Eastern Market. Detroit, MI., August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

⁹⁵ Jessica Chasmar, "Bankrupt Detroit: As Many As 50,000 Stray Dogs Roam City In Packs," *Washington Times*, August 21, 2013, Accessed July 20, 2014.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/aug/21/bankrupt-detroit-many-50000-stray-dogs-roam-city-s/>

⁹⁶ John Patrick Leary, "Detroitism."

Said argues that orientalists established an 'us' versus 'them' dyadic opposition based upon an imaginary and arbitrary geographical line which divided Occidental from Oriental cultural identity. Following Foucault, Said states:

My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. Moreover, so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism. In brief, because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action.⁹⁷

Through philological and scientific manners of data collection and analysis, the Orientalists established and reinforced the notion of a Western cultural identity as superior, advanced, rational, and civilized by establishing the 'other' in opposition to these qualities. Said further argues that the orientalist project is productive of a Western identity as well as, and established in opposition to, oriental identity. The analysis provided by Said interrogates the power/knowledge complex inherent to this project, which is unequal and prone to generalization. Historically, Said notes that this knowledge was used as a justification of colonization on the basis of a supposed moral obligation to paternalism.

Leary, by indirectly invoking Said in the title of this article argues something similar with regard to power/knowledge and narrative construction of Detroit. What each of these forms of representation serve to do in their own ways, with the authority of both scholarship and what is implicit to printed media, is to produce a view from outside that reinforces the dominant unreflective notions of Detroit. Of these modes, Leary Asserts:

⁹⁷ Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 3.

Taken together, all the images of the ruined city become fragments of stories told so often about Detroit that they are at the same time instantly familiar and utterly vague, like a dimly remembered episode from childhood or a vivid dream whose storyline we can't quite remember in the morning: Murder city! Unemployment! Drugs! White flight! Crime!⁹⁸

Ultimately, Leary like Said argues that these forms of representation obscure through overgeneralization the real matter of lived experience through 'othering' and constructing an enforced identity. It is also interesting to note that contemporary attempts to represent Detroit, though well meaning (as noted by Leary), share a whiff of supposed moral authority discussed by Said resulting in various forms of paternalism. From the utopian representations discussed by Leary, to the nostalgic and adventurous gentrification discussed by Herron,⁹⁹ and finally to the state imposition of an Emergency Financial Manager on 14 March, 2013, these forms of literary, artistic, cultural, and political relationships to Detroit are imposed from the outside and they are based on the power/ knowledge complex. The problem is not so much that these theorists, journalists, and urbanists are not Detroiters, but that frequently their reflections do not respect or take into account the interests of Detroiters. Further, as argued by Benjamin Belton, the representations that contribute to an *archive* that give rise to a shared cultural sense of place are expressions of power that produce material and psychological effects. As such, the act of representing a place should be evaluated normatively.

Belton, in his *Orinoco Flow*, articulates the notion of an *archive* as related to place in the following manner:

⁹⁸ John Patrick Leary, "Detroitism."

⁹⁹ See pp. 71-87 below.

The idea of the *archive* that I develop here is that of a chronologically layered set of notions about the world, each succeeding layer becoming dominant for a time, not superseding those beneath it but rather adding another layer of world interpretation to the *archive* as a whole.¹⁰⁰

Belton analyzes the *archive* as a 'diachronic' (pertaining to time slice analysis) and 'supranational' structure.¹⁰¹ Belton claims: "As the *archive* expands to include more comprehensive source material, history becomes a field of battle. The *archive* functions as the literary field of possible distinctions made by observers."¹⁰²

Generally, *Orinoco Flow* treats the interaction between elements of culture, economy, and information as they give rise to the production of regional space. Though focused upon the Orinoco River region of Venezuela, this text methodologically offers an interesting schema which can be used to understand current debates surrounding representation, politics, and economy as they pertain to urban centers such as Detroit. In this work, Belton attempts to answer the broad question: "What are the narrative relationships among the development of capitalism, culture, and regional space?"¹⁰³ He argues that these spheres (i.e., economics, culture, and space) are layers which "...coevolved' and together constitute a global political economy..."¹⁰⁴ In general terms, Belton asserts that regional space and knowledge about that space arise from the interaction of multiple forms of knowledge (elements of cultural, literary, and academic

¹⁰⁰ Benjamin Belton, *Orinoco Flow: Culture, Narrative, and the Political Economy of Information*, (Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2003), 7.

¹⁰¹ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 7.

¹⁰² Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 177.

¹⁰³ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 1.

¹⁰⁴ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 1.

discourse) reflecting the interests of global systematic capitalism.¹⁰⁵ These multiple forms of knowledge interacting with one another are distributed in a manner which produces an *archive* of information that is historically layered and at times contradictory.

The narratives within this *archive* which refer to a specific place provide the raw data that helps form the *topos* of a place. The term *topos* is traditionally used in a literary context and refers to an overarching theme or motif. Belton presents the term *topos* more generally as an "...imaginary cultural image..."¹⁰⁶ The raw data which contributes to the emergence of a *topos* by Belton's account is within the purview of the elites, while related components are 'packaged' and disseminated more widely as particular filtered *topoi*. Of this interaction between *topos* and *topoi*, Belton states:

The *archive* thus becomes a repository of images about the region and the *topos* becomes the cultural site of those images when they are projected onto geographical place. The *topos*, constructed through narratives and images that circulate within the cultural sphere of capital, is an ideal representation of a place - a fantastic place, but a place nonetheless. The Orinocan *topos* develops as an imaginary geography that exists alongside the real. It can be developed systematically from archival elements, but still has no "real" referent. Using different sets of elements, different *topoi* may be constructed around a place, and form different "filters" for how that place is projected and perceived. The *topos*, abstract and imaginary, becomes... the narrativization of that imaginary geography in the political unconscious.¹⁰⁷

While the *archive* represents a materially real general repository of raw data accumulated by global systematic capitalism (a sort of ground phenomenon upon which discourse generally rests), the *topos* is an emergent property of this *archive* as a set of narratives and images related to a specific region. The *topos*,

¹⁰⁵ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 2.

¹⁰⁶ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 2.

¹⁰⁷ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 10-11.

as Belton notes in the passage above, is an "...ideal representation of a place - a fantastic place, but a place nonetheless."¹⁰⁸ Various *topoi* are constructed, developed, and disseminated using various elements of the *archive* that "...form different 'filters' for how that place is projected and perceived"¹⁰⁹ and at the same time provide the basic structure of the *topos*.

The multiple layers of the *archive*, the emergent *topos*, and the various packaged and filtered *topoi* co-produce one another in a manner necessary and expedient to global systematic capital. Julie Griffith Kees notes this co-productive interaction in her 2005 review of *Orinoco Flow*:

As the *archive* reflects historical and geopolitical contexts of cultural strata, so the *topos* expresses the process and products of 'imaginary placemaking,' providing markers that originate in narrative space and images that correspond to sites in the geographical landscape. ... The belief system dominant at a particular time is therefore distilled into archival layers of records through the context of specific experience.¹¹⁰

The various chronological layers of the *archive*, then, produce an arising *topos* or imaginary sense of place which overlays a specific 'real' regional space. This *topos* provides the ground of discourse about a place and it has material effects. It is clear that neither *archive* nor *topos* are neat sets of systematic assumptions or data arranged in a consistent manner, since they arise from such a myriad of sources and they represent the sediment of various debates, disagreements, and narrative representations, generalizations, and idealizations. Belton, accordingly, notes (specifically of the *Orinoco archive*, though we can take this to be a general danger) that "Without a conscious archivist developing an internal system of cross references, an 'uncontrolled vocabulary' developed, with

¹⁰⁸ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 10-11.

¹⁰⁹ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 11.

¹¹⁰ Julie Griffith Kees, "Review: *Orinoco Flow*: Culture, Narrative, and the Political Economy of Information by Benjamin Keith Belton", *The Library Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (October 2005): 528.

overlapping, contingent, and at times contradictory categories."¹¹¹ This is not to present the *archive* as having no salient features since it develops in keeping with the interests of the geopolitical and cultural forces which take part in its production. The *archive* is not a neutral scientific repository nor is it a consistent and systematically organized data set. This is not to say that there is no organizing principle. Belton argues that the *archive* arises pregnant with the assumptions and beliefs of the institutions of power that are involved with its production and, accordingly, tends to serve and express these implicit goals and assumptions (either consciously or unconsciously) through its further development. At root, then, the *archive* is implicitly an expression of institutional power relations and tends through its meaning context to replicate these relations of power. We should note that as the *archive* produces a *topos* or sense of a place, this *topos* itself produces a material effect upon the geographic region itself.

An interesting feature of the Orinoco *topos* developed by Belton is the notion of the cultural capacity for *displacement* ("...ideologically distorted and mystifying descriptions of space, place, and the site of production of modernity itself."¹¹²), which is discussed as related to disorder. As the region is developed as an imaginary place, "...disorder is presented as a mode of producing a new order; order itself is conceived as change."¹¹³ Belton identifies the key elements of *displacement* as "...acceptance of the unknown as a positive value . . . desire for the new . . . acceptance of economic, social, and cultural risks [and]

¹¹¹ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 72.

¹¹² Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 2.

¹¹³ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 110.

chance”.¹¹⁴ Through the cultural capacity for *displacement*, then, a region is presented as a site of disorder which must be brought into order. Descriptions of the geographical space are presented in enticing and somewhat mystical terms, creating a particular and instrumentally valuable form of *topos* which projects a horizon of disorder which must be brought into a state of order by the classification systems arising from the dominant power structure.

Discussed in these terms, *displacement* shows itself to be a psychological element of a narrative need and fundamental to the construction of a region as 'other'. When related to physical space, *displacement* operates like a necessarily expanding frontier or horizon beyond which the unknown is mystified and romanticized. Along with the multiple layers of positive knowledge and representation presented by the *archive*, the sense of place is also produced by reaching out with our desires toward an unknown. Belton illustrates this with respect to the Orinoco region by citing several explorer narratives and fictions by which various objects of cultural desire are projected as being just beyond our horizon, on the frontier of this region: nude women, untapped natural bounty, exotic places containing riches, all just around the next bend of the river, just out of reach. Through *displacement*, our desires are projected in a manner productive of an exotic mystique of a place which justifies the risks associated with the intellectual and physical appropriation of a region. The region, decisively other, disorderly, and dangerous also becomes a fetish-object. Belton, citing de Certeau, describes this process as follows:

¹¹⁴ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 110–111.

...eroticizing of the other's body... goes hand in hand with the formation of an ethics of production. At the same time that it creates a profit, the voyage creates a lost paradise relative to a body-object, to an erotic body.¹¹⁵

In this manner, the *archive*, *topos*, and *displacement* work together to entice desires and offer justifications with regard to what a region means and how the inhabitants of such a region should be treated. We can see from the account offered by Belton that *displacement* continually justifies colonial expansion throughout the Orinoco region. It is for reasons similar to these that issues of representation and the effects of these representations upon Detroit have become socially, culturally, and politically important and they have garnered the attention of academics and the mass media alike.

The schema for understanding archival representation offered by Belton illustrates that writing about places like Detroit contributes to what is really an integrated ad hoc network of power, domination, and economic interests. This supports the argument made by Leary, that such forms of representation produce both material and social effects. It is quite easy to read the tension between the second and third modes of representation introduced by Leary (“Detroit Lament” and “Detroit Utopia”) as an act of *displacement*, one that represents the city as a site of both repellent disorder requiring ordering and one that represents the city as a “blank canvas” or land of opportunity. We can see this quite clearly in the widely publicized Detroit myth of the \$500 houses in abandoned neighbourhoods presented to the creative and investor classes as opportunities to bring order to disorder and as justifications for cultural and economic investment risks. Problematically, the city is not blank nor is it empty. Interestingly, as we have

¹¹⁵ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 30.

already observed with Jacobs, Hardt, and Negri, Detroit is not a site of disorder. Rather, Detroit has its own brand of order emergent from informal networks of mutual support. These networks, as we have reflected upon earlier, are immediately unintelligible to those unfamiliar with the cultural forces at work at street level.

These are some of the pitfalls of attempting to introduce Detroit in its particularity. This is, however, the task at hand. Against the backdrop of these reflections the question arises: who am I to write about Detroit? Before ink hits the page I must acknowledge my own perspective. I am not quite an outsider, having been a close neighbour to the city for most of my life. Windsor is so close to Detroit that our fire department engages the Detroit fire department in a tug-a-war across the river as part of Windsor's Bluesfest (previously as part of the International Freedom Festival) yearly.¹¹⁶ Detroit is so close to Windsor that occasionally Windsorites get drunk and swim there.¹¹⁷ Even so, the cultural context differs significantly and so any attempt made to write about Detroit should acknowledge both its perspective and the position of power that the act of writing occurs from, avoiding in the process the temptation to represent this city as a 'disordered' Other or falling into the common tropes of 'lament' or 'utopia' that have so commonly been used to entice forms of urban recolonization in the form of gentrification. Such acts of urban recolonization pay little or no heed to the

¹¹⁶ See: "Tug Across the River: the only international tug of war", *Eyes on Windsor*, July 10, 2015, Accessed July 20, 2014. <http://eyesonwindsor.com/event/tug-across-the-river/>.

¹¹⁷ See: Trevor Wilhelm, "Drunk Man Swims Across Detroit River (With Video)," *Windsor Star*, July 23, 2013, Accessed July 20, 2014. <http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/drunk-man-attempts-swim-across-detroit-river>.

strong cultural forces and forms of order emergent from informal networks of mutual support at work in Detroit.



Figure 1.8 *Windsor from Detroit People Mover.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

In light of these words of caution we shall turn first to some of the publications by Jerry Herron, director of the Honours College at Wayne State University in Midtown. Herron has published widely on Detroit. Here we will examine a small number of selected works. As noted, in order to grasp Detroit in its particularity we must also engage the mythical understanding of this place arising from its popular representation. These mythical representations, as stories that we share, belong to the ‘common’ as well since it is through these representations that much of our ineffable sense of a place emerges.

Interestingly, with Herron, we will begin with a second order fiction: a fiction about a fiction about a place.

In his *I Remember Detroit*,¹¹⁸ Herron describes the formative moment of the narrative construction of the region that was to become the city of Detroit through the tale of the explorer Laument. Upon settling the region, Laument adopted a new name: Antoine de la Mothe, Sieur de Cadillac. 'De la Mothe' he "...plucked out of thin air..."¹¹⁹, as Herron notes. Laument was 'Sire' of nothing. So, as Laument (Cadillac) constructs a narrative sense of place for his new town, he likewise creates a narrative to reinvent himself. Herron relates a sampling of the contents of the 1701 letter sent by Cadillac back to France:

'Since you have directed me to render an account of it, I will do so', Cadillac began his report to the Sun King, Louis XIV:
'...the freshness of the beautiful waters keeps the banks always green. The prairies are bordered by long and broad rows of fruit trees which have never felt the careful hand of the vigilant gardener. Here, also, orchards, young and old, soften and bend their branches under the weight and quantity of their fruit, towards the mother earth, which has produced them... [O]ne sees assembled by hundreds the timid deer and faun, also the squirrel bounding in his eagerness to collect the apples and plums with which the earth is covered ... In a word, the climate is temperate, and the air purified through the day and night by a gentle breeze ... None but the enemies of truth could be enemies to the establishment [of the town Cadillac proposed] so necessary to the increase of the glory of the king.' It was a lie, of course, this exigent little rhapsody about virgin, ownerless paradise, with fruit and wildlife thick upon the ground, and nobody there but Cadillac to gather them in, just like his new name was a lie, with his bogus allusion to the noble lineage, which is only to say that Cadillac was a visionary man of his time, neither better nor worse than might be expected, although his town-building scheme was both personally shrewd and also more enlightened than the usual snatch-and-run tactics of colonial exploiters.¹²⁰

To establish his town, Laument (Cadillac) represents the region as a virgin paradise, bursting with fruit and wildlife. This fictive account of the region offered

¹¹⁸ Jerry Herron, "I Remember Detroit," in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt, comp. Berlin: Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany, 2004), 28-39.

¹¹⁹ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 30-31.

¹²⁰ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 31.

by Cadillac was meant to arouse and objectify our desire in order to justify the risk of frontier settlement. Sadly it did not work out so well for the fictive Sieur de Cadillac, who in 1705 was brought up on charges that today we would call insider trading, though he was ultimately acquitted.¹²¹ Regardless of the acquittal his career was over. Putting aside the end of his career, Herron reflects that the story of Cadillac represents a typical beginning for the city of Detroit; one which fits the character of the place. He states:

Nevertheless, there was something special about Cadillac's situation and the way Detroit, even then, began to assert itself. Politics, and greed, absentee landlords and the defeat of ideals, the curdling of expectations artificially sweetened with lies: it's our story all right. The problem with Detroit - from the very beginning - has been figuring out what the place was good for, and then figuring out who to blame when things turned out other than as planned. It's doubtful that any other city has given rise either to so many idealistic propositions, or so much blaming - or to so much signifying as a result. Detroit was providing a type for this made-up country of ours almost a century before the United States even existed.¹²²

Throughout his works on Detroit, Herron represents the city as the historical site of our collective forgetting of history. His *AfterCulture: Detroit and the Humiliation of History* engages in a conversational style with the project of situating the contemporary city within its own mythical landscape. Herron's engagement with Detroit centers on Henry Ford and the advent of modern automotive assembly line manufacturing. In many ways, Herron notes, Henry Ford made Detroit what it is. With the advent of his moving assembly line in 1913, Ford put Detroit on wheels. Detroit in turn, as the saying goes, put the world on wheels. Along with our new wheels granted by this watershed moment of technological innovation, Ford also engineered immense cultural changes. One of the most important of these changes was the institution of the Ford Motor Company 'five dollar day, five

¹²¹ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 31.

¹²² Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 31.

day work week' which made it possible for unprecedented numbers of unskilled workers to buy houses, educate their children, and generally gain access to the middle class within North America. It is this capacity to generate the middle class that is key to understanding the disposition of the analysis offered by Herron, since he takes the generation of the middle class to be the function of cities generally.



Figure 1.9 Niki's, Beaubien Street, formerly the Dodge Brothers Facility. Detroit MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

The consequences of Ford's innovation ranged from the rise of a middle class to the massive necessary retooling of infrastructure; from the reconfiguration of neighbourhoods and cities to the reconfiguring and retooling of subjectivity for engagement with assembly labour, and (as Herron argues) the humiliation of history as well. The first seeds of this innovation were sown in a rather modest facility (borrowed from the Dodge brothers) on Beaubien Street in 1903. Detroit represents the epicentre for a technological and cultural revolution which swept across and reconfigured the world. At the beginning of the preface to his *AfterCulture* Herron states:

This is a book about Detroit; it is also, unavoidably, a book about representation because Detroit is the most representative city in America. Detroit used to stand for success, and now it stands for failure. In that sense, the city is not just a physical location; it is also a project, a projection of imaginary fears and desires. This is the place where bad times get sent to make them belong to somebody else; thus, it seems easy to agree about Detroit because the city embodies everything the rest of the country wants to get over.¹²³

Given his emphasis on representation in the passage above, the Detroit that Herron writes about is decisively the myth. It should be clear enough from this passage that Herron reads Detroit as, to borrow a turn of phrase from Belton, "...an imaginary place within an imaginary space."¹²⁴ What sort of representation does Herron present of this imaginary place standing against physical space?¹²⁵

¹²³ Jerry Herron, *AfterCulture: Detroit and the Humiliation of History*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 9.

¹²⁴ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 13.

¹²⁵ Note: it is not my claim that we are ever able to abstract away from this act of representation to a 'true' or 'essential' treatment of any city. This act of representation is epistemologically necessary (as we will see in the second chapter and as we, to an extent, noted at the start with Nietzsche and his treatment of history). We should, however, take the time and care to reflect ethically and politically upon the ethical and political effects of representation in terms of the power/ knowledge complex introduced above. Herron implicitly takes up a disposed perspective with regard to his analysis of Detroit. The task here is to take up a normative analysis of this disposed perspective.

According to Herron, Detroit is functionally the cultural capital of North America, its being "... the most representative city in America."¹²⁶ Accordingly, by examining Detroit we can infer something about North America generally. This argument is also taken up by LeDuff, who argues that the conditions in Detroit (as extreme as they may seem) are becoming quite general in urban centers across North America. LeDuff notes that "...what happened here is happening out there." and issues the challenge: "Go ahead and laugh at Detroit. Because you are laughing at yourself."¹²⁷ LeDuff bases this claim on the material conditions and general trajectory of decline in Detroit, elements of which can be found to varying degrees in cities across North America. Herron, on the other hand, identifies the production of myth and the production of forms of representation that humiliates history as foundational to the notion of Detroit as our cultural capital.

The understanding of Detroit advanced by Herron is at root functionalist. This city, like North America, is treated by Herron as a giant engine designed to produce a middle class, and Detroit did just that. People flocked in droves to Detroit for the prospect of a middle class life attained through the manufacturing industry. In 1910 the population of Detroit was 465,766 residents. By 1950 the population of the city was officially reported as 1,849,568 (unofficially about two million).¹²⁸ Since the population height of roughly two million in the fifties, and in

¹²⁶ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 9.

¹²⁷ LeDuff, *Detroit*, 5.

¹²⁸ "Detroit (city), Michigan," *State & County QuickFacts*, United States Census Bureau, June 8, 2006. Accessed January 21, 2013. www.census.gov.

response to the forces of global systematic capitalism, the myth surrounding

Detroit has dominated the narratives of flight and abandonment. Herron notes:

Detroit - more than any other spot in this country - has been so thoroughly humiliated by history, so emptied of the content, both material and human, that used to make this place *mean*, that it becomes questionable whether the city still exists at all in any practical sense. ... Inevitably, then, a sign that stands in for Detroit - a place where fewer than half the more than two million former residents still choose to live - is going to be problematic because recognition carries a considerable price. Everyone who lives here has become familiar with the observation (usually delivered by visitors, in a state of mild surprise): "Detroit looks just like a city!"¹²⁹

"Detroit looks just like a city!"¹³⁰ This claim always bothered me, since Herron seems to be in command of an essential notion of what a city is which allows him to claim that Detroit no longer satisfies this notion. In the summer of 2014 I booked an appointment with Herron to try to understand how he is able to make this claim. To provide an overview map of the position held by Herron as simply as possible, he described his argument as follows:

Premise 1: The function of cities like Detroit is the production of the middle class.

Premise 2: Detroit no longer produces the middle class.

Conclusion: Detroit is no longer a city.

It is by way of this argument that Herron is able to claim what follows about the humiliation of history, the mistaken nostalgia of those who attempt to return to the city, and the amusement park and pedagogical status of Detroit today. Simply, if Detroit is no longer a city (or is a city/not), it is then open to these other sorts of uses.

Herron argues that this great egress from the city and the subsequent ruination is implicit in the structure and function of Detroit specifically and North

¹²⁹ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 14.

¹³⁰ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 14.

American cities generally. Herron understands the case of Detroit to be a sort of extreme case of a cultural will to abandon cities. In his September 2009 HRG talk at the University of Windsor, Herron used the example of Hudson's department store to illustrate this phenomenon.



Figure 1.10 J.L. Hudson Store Comemorative Plaque, ("The Big Store") Woodward Ave. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

He argued that Hudson's was a sort of training ground designed ultimately to refute its own need. North American culture, Herron argues, once needed

Hudson's in order to train the newly emerging middle class how to live, and more importantly, how to shop. The department store itself was in operation and (as Herron argues) performing this pedagogical function from 1911 until 1983 when the store closed. These lessons having been learned, the Hudson's building sat vacant from 1989 until it was demolished (imploded) using explosives on October 24th 1998. The site is now home to an underground parking garage.



Figure 1.11 *Parking Lot/ Formerly Hudsons, Woodward Ave. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016.*
Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

In much the same way, Herron argues that the city of Detroit was built in order to train North American culture how not to need both cities and history.



Figure 1.12 *Greek Town*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

Herron claims:

The city taught us what we needed to know to become the people we thought we wanted to become. Pre-eminently, it has taught us how not to need it anymore, so we put it aside like a worn-out appliance, or a set of old tires that you prop up against a garage wall, or put down in the basement, not wanting for some reason to just throw them away,

but not having any real use for them either. The capital of our republic may be in Washington, but the capital of our culture is in Detroit, where the future is all behind us.¹³¹

Detroit, according to Herron, insofar as it can still be called a city, still serves a purpose for North American culture. He describes today's Detroit in *AfterCulture* as a haven and destination for adventure tourists (some permanent, some weekend warriors) who misunderstand their relationship nostalgically to this place - a place where we were all once (upon a time) connected to one-another as we are not in our current suburban lives. The middle class now visits Detroit, and not Detroit proper, but rather a safe theme park rendered version through festivals, sporting events, the Greek Town experience, or through the fish bowl perspective of the plates of glass that separate the downtown condo dweller from street level.¹³² Detroit, from Herron's perspective, serves as a guilt ridden theme park that reminds us of what may happen to the rest of us while suggesting to us that we are not responsible.

For Herron, Detroit represents paradoxically both a problem and a solution of a specific historical /moral sort. He states of Detroit:

But this is a third world city that we – not they – made. Its degradation, therefore, humiliates not only the physical remains 'we' left behind, but also implicates the cultural pretensions on which 'our' superiority and insight are founded. This may be why Detroit presents so frightful, yet irresistible, a challenge. The perpetual othering of this place – the consigning of its too familiar terrors to another world – makes it possible not only to evade responsibility for our own worst fears, but also, perhaps more crucially, it preserves for us the belief that our culture does not carry within it those seeds of death, which are [sic.] come to such terrible fruition here.¹³³

¹³¹ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 36.

¹³² This is the perspective from which Herron argues. Interestingly, this perspective removed and protected from street level relates nicely to the discussion of 'birds of passage' introduced by Jacobs above.

¹³³ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 26-27.

What we find emerging as the product of these Fordist automotive plants, then, is a new class of consumers habituated to be distant from their objects, with mobile and nomadic lives made possible by automobiles, living in increasingly decentralized sub-urban clusters. Herron alludes to a further development engineered deliberately by Ford, namely a particular relationship to history:

"History is bunk," Henry Ford is supposed to have said. What he actually said is a lot more interesting, and also smarter about what keeps us together, as Americans, regardless of the differences that drive us apart. "History is more or less the bunk," Ford told a reporter in 1916, after losing a famous libel suit against a Chicago paper that had called him an "ignorant idealist." "We want to live in the present," he said, "and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we make today." The problem with a history like that - one being made up fresh each day, on the spot - is that it requires a lot of clearance work, which is where the souvenirs and the culture of collecting come in. You have to be constantly making bunk out of the past - converting historic fixity into transportable souvenirs - if the ground is to be kept free for new construction whether it's architecture or machines or memory you are talking about.¹³⁴

Herron takes great pains to describe the *Henry Ford Museum* and *Greenfield Village*, as "...twin elements, a museum and a village-based theme park, each carrying out brilliantly Ford's proposition about history and bunk and souvenirs."¹³⁵ The place is a shrine to Ford's fascination with material history. The collection consists of immense quantities of random souvenirs and various sundry (i.e., kitchen implements, farm equipment, airplanes, steam locomotives, etc.) as well as bits of material objects associated with significant moments in history (i.e., the chair Lincoln was sitting in when he was assassinated, a vial containing Thomas Edison's dying breath, etc.). Herron notes of this collection that "...even now, after modern curatorial attempts at organizing and weeding

¹³⁴ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 36.

¹³⁵ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 36.

out, still bears the stamp of the creator, and his madman's-attic version of historic preservation."¹³⁶

The museum itself sits in the center of the village-themed park, the museum element acting as a form of bank which the theme park can draw upon for credibility. Herron claims that this park "...advances a proposition about history that is powerful precisely because it is impossible"¹³⁷, namely that it relocates historical artefacts "within the context of no context."¹³⁸ Herron claims:

All that stuff adds up to something, all right: the inescapable weight of the past, here monumentalized. And just at the spot where that weight is apparently the greatest, that's where Henry Ford levitates his myth of village life free of historic entanglements. He venerates the past, with a wish-fulfilling intensity, by forgetting how to remember that it finally matters, except as a source of souvenirs.¹³⁹

Interestingly, Greenfield Village appropriates archival authority while undermining the very notion of substantive history by Herron's account. The interesting thing about souvenirs is that they bring about powerful recollections of and associations with the past. They are, however, individually powerful in this manner and have the effect of individuating rather than establishing a connection with and relationship to a shared collective as does substantive history. The power of souvenirs, rather, rests in nostalgia and individuation. Again, Herron notes of substantive history:

It's a way of asking questions about the past so that memory adds up to something more than personal: who am I, where did I come from, what should I do? It's how I begins to turn into we. History places limitations on an individual, then. But it also gives you something to belong to. History is an explanation.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 37.

¹³⁷ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 37.

¹³⁸ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 37.

¹³⁹ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 37.

¹⁴⁰ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 38.

Unlike this substantive history referred to here, the object of a place like the *Henry Ford Museum/Greenfield Village* is not a collective connection, nor remembering, but rather a particular form of nostalgia: forgetting. History is thus humiliated. In stark contrast to the formation of an identity and the treatment of history in the service of life advanced by Nietzsche in his *Untimely Meditations*, this nostalgic, souvenir-oriented, and individuating form of history was deployed for the production of the nomadic and mobile individual discussed by Richard Florida in his *Who's Your City?*.¹⁴¹ Florida argues (in the most general terms) for a consumerist relationship to place on the basis of our mobility within the context of contemporary North American culture. Effectively, we should shop for our cities, finding those that best suit our needs, rather than taking up the production of place as a shared project situated upon a shared history and culture. It is interesting to observe the effects of this very consumerist mobility upon the city of Detroit.

It is extremely important to note, when coming to terms with the analysis offered by Herron, that he self admittedly writes from the point of view of, and for the benefit of the largely white middle-class. This fish-bowl perspective is largely not that of the native population of Detroit, nor does this perspective by its very design engage with the material and physiological issues that present themselves to our average Detroiter. In his 2009 HRG presentation at the University of Windsor, Herron himself alludes to this and, in a hushed voice full of pathos notes that well over 50% of children in Detroit grow up in poverty. The analysis of Detroit offered by Herron, in terms of middle-class America is both

¹⁴¹ See Richard Florida, *Who's Your City?*

interesting and, in a sense, correct. As Herron is fond of noting in his public lectures, "*We are, all of us not from Detroit. Detroit is the place that we have to remember to forget.*" It seems clear, however, that the 'we' Herron refers to here is not the 'we' of the 'common' discussed by Jacobs, Hardt, and Negri, but rather that of the *middle-class*. In the final analysis, Herron is less concerned with writing about the historically situated lived experience of habitation in Detroit, than with how the myth of this city fits into his narratively constructed broken down engine for the creation of the middle class/ theme park vision of the humiliation of history. For Herron, Detroit is a vehicle to expose the presuppositions and effects of a Fordist appropriation of history. Thus far, his work does a good job of exposing this framework and its effects upon culture at large.

Broadly, the analysis offered by Herron is a 'packaged' representation of a place - which both relies upon and contributes to the myth of Detroit. There is something fishy, though, about a representation of this place written for and about a middle class which (statistically speaking) has largely abandoned Detroit. Given that 36.2% of the population of the city lives below the poverty line (figures for 2007-2011)¹⁴² and given that the region boasts a per capita income of only \$15,261 yearly (2011)¹⁴³, the representation of the city of Detroit about, and for the benefit of the middle class seems to be inappropriate. Thus, when Herron begins his preface by stating "This is a book about Detroit..."¹⁴⁴ the Detroit to

¹⁴² United States Census Bureau.

¹⁴³ United States Census Bureau.

¹⁴⁴ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 9.

which he refers is not the place (i.e., the geographical region) by that name, but rather the imaginary or mythical space.

Between works like those of Herron, LeDuff, and the constant stream of bad news rolling in on a daily basis from the national media, it is easy to see why many form a sense of this city depicting it as a depressed, crime rampant, humiliated, and (thanks to the photo suits offered by Andrew Moore¹⁴⁵, Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre¹⁴⁶, or Dan Austin and Sean Doerr¹⁴⁷) an empty post-apocalyptic wasteland. As LeDuff correctly observes, the press loves its stories of rotten buildings, murder, and decay. In short, these media representations tend toward the extreme. Such media representations tend to falsify and sensationalize the context that residents of Detroit find themselves struggling within.

The perspective from which one writes and the interests that are taken to heart in the writing of such representations of places (here, specifically Detroit¹⁴⁸) have massive material and psychological effects upon the place represented. While the news media sensationalizes the context of Detroit, it also produces the impression of a wild frontier to be populated, filled up with new uses, and colonized. Along with Belton, we can read this as an act of cultural *displacement*.

¹⁴⁵ Moore, *Detroit Dissembled*.

¹⁴⁶ Marchand and Meffre, *The Ruins of Detroit*, (Göttingen: Steidl, 2010).

¹⁴⁷ Austin and Doerr, *Lost Detroit*.

¹⁴⁸ We should note that Windsor is no stranger to negative press representations. Generally national news about this southern most city in Canada generally tends to follow three themes: Crime, unemployment, and labour disputes. The largest international coverage of Windsor recently (2012) involved Stephen Colbert `describing Windsor as "Earth's rectum". CBC's coverage of this comment involved an online pole asking the question: "Is Stephen Colbert's description of Windsor as 'the Earth's rectum' good or bad for the city?" As of January, 2015, the results showed that 86.15% of respondents think this depiction of Windsor is a net gain for the city.

The specific dangers with the representation of Detroit offered by Herron arise from his characterization of the perpetual 'othering' of Detroit combined with his assertion that this city is no longer a city. These twin pillars of Herron's argument open the door to a host of potential abuses of the present population and at the same time marks the struggles of embedded communities as futile, arising from a self-misunderstanding nostalgia.

We should pause to note that Herron does limit his project in an interesting way. He restricts his analysis to a descriptive account of a cultural phenomenon, while withholding normative judgments. However, Herron, as a prominent academic in Detroit and avid Detroit theorist, contributes substantially to the *archive* that gives rise to the *topos* of Detroit in a manner that encourages the *displacement* described by Belton. While intellectual distance and normative disengagement may seem to be a comfortable fish bowl perspective, we have noted with respect to Belton that the *archive* produces material and psychological effects. Already there exists a thriving adventure tourism market within the city prominently featuring the activity ruin spelunking.¹⁴⁹ Arguments presented by those like Richard Florida compound the situation. Florida is well known for calling for waves of the creative class to move into the 'abandoned' neighbourhoods of Detroit to pave the way for gentrifying activities. The gentrification called for by theorists like Florida quite effectively pushes the long-time residents of the city out of their long-time homes. These theorists paint a picture of Detroit that encourages North Americans to treat lightly the suffering of

¹⁴⁹ Ruin spelunking (sometimes called "urbexing") is a practice that has emerged in Detroit involving the (usually unauthorized) exploration of the many abandoned buildings that dot the urban landscape.

the economically disadvantaged citizens of this region. Intentionally or otherwise, these contributions to the *archive* giving rise to a sense of Detroit are contributions to the abuse of statistically most Detroiters. With an understanding of the act of *displacement* brought about by this tension between “Detroit Lament” and “Detroit Utopia,” we will turn to a reflection about what sorts of latent capacities exist within these deindustrializing cities.

1.3 Deindustrializing Cities: Latent capacities

In the context that many de-industrializing cities find themselves in, we find an odd tension between the images of decay and despair that invite colonization of these regions, and a form of political and creative hope for the invention of new values. To be sure, the ongoing process of de-industrialization in many 'rust belt' cities tends to free the imagination opening up the possibilities for new projects and new values. What seems most interesting in the analysis of Detroit offered by Herron, is his claim that this city "...is the most representative city in America"¹⁵⁰. While far from arguing that Detroit is a typical American city, Detroit acts as a sort of extreme case of the most typical of North American values. This is an insight, Herron argues, that is important for the media to deny. Much of the force of his argument is that Detroit is no longer a city, at least insofar as it is represented within culture. He argues:

...it raises the suspicion that if Detroit really *were* a city - like other cities - then the things that have happened in it, and to it, might happen anywhere. And given what has gone on here, especially in terms of media coverage, the wish to have Detroit *not* be representative is powerful; this accounts for the tentative, and perhaps cautionary observation that the place only *looks* like a city. Despite appearances, it really isn't one, at least not any longer. Detroit has to be deprived of its reality so that everybody else can feel better about theirs.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 9.

¹⁵¹ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 14-15.

By the account offered by Herron in this passage, the perpetual 'othering' of Detroit has the whiff of a desperate culturally necessary form of denial. In order to speak of the latent capacities within this context it is necessary to deny this denial. Simply stated, Detroit presents itself as an excellent object for immanent critique, the core critical movement of Frankfurt Critical Theory. Max Horkheimer describes this critical movement in the following manner:

Again and again in history, ideas have cast off their swaddling clothes and struck out against the social systems that bore them. The cause, in large degree, is that spirit, language, and all the realms of the mind necessarily stake universal claims. Even ruling groups, intent above all upon defending their particular interests, must stress universal motifs in religion, morality and science. Thus originates the contradiction between existent and ideology, a contradiction that spurs all historical progress. While conformism presupposes the basic harmony of the two and includes the minor discrepancies in the ideology itself, philosophy makes men conscious of the contradiction between them. On the one hand it appraises society by the light of the very ideas that it recognizes as its highest values; on the other, it is aware that these ideas reflect the taints of reality.¹⁵²

This passage from *Eclipse of Reason*, in the chapter entitled "On The Concept of Philosophy" presents us with a potent mode of criticism which would confront a culture with the tension between its highest values and its own practices. If Herron is correct, and Detroit represents the cultural capital of North America, a sort of Mecca for the American way of life, the decline and crisis present within this city should invite this first movement of immanent critique which would act as an indictment of these values.¹⁵³

Immanent critique, understood in terms of this first movement, however, is limited insofar as it does not present us with the means to dialectically move beyond the values that it critiques. A true revolutionary mode of reflection must depend, to some extent, on the fleshing out of capacities latent within the crisis

¹⁵² Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, (New York: Continuum, 1974), 178.

¹⁵³ We will return to this in the third chapter. See 3.2 below.

context itself. It is for that reason that we will examine the works of Andrew Herscher, Grace Lee and James Boggs.

Andrew Herscher, in his *Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit*, emphasises the common overarching theme of abandonment of the city. The *Guide* is not directed toward the formation of a representation of the geographical region of Detroit, nor is its content directed towards Detroiters themselves. The *Guide* is primarily engaged with the notion of 'unreal estate,' which is property (real estate) which has lost value in terms of the global economy, but arguably has taken on new or 'unreal' alternative sorts of value. The guide itself serves as a field manual or travel book highlighting the alternative values which emerge from the use to which space in Detroit is put by various individual artists, artist collectives and community organizations. The notion of 'unreal estate' rests upon the material and archival effects of global systematic capital insofar as the opening up of possibilities is the result of these forces emptying out both population and industry from the city. Herscher, however, is not primarily concerned with these forces, but rather with an exploration of the happening of 'unreal estate' as an artistic and cultural phenomenon. Herscher discusses 'unreal estate' (as it pertains to Detroit) as follows:

What if Detroit has lost population, jobs, infrastructure, investment, and all else that the conventional narratives point to - but, precisely as a result of those losses, has gained opportunities to understand and engage novel urban conditions? What if one sort of property value has decreased in Detroit - the exchange value brokered by the failing market economy - but other sorts of values have reciprocally increased, use values that lack salience or even existence in that economy? What if Detroit has not only fallen apart, emptied out, disappeared and/ or shrunk, but has also transformed, becoming a new sort of urban formation that only appears depleted, voided or abjected through the lenses of conventional architecture and urbanism? The *Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit* is

dedicated to exploring these and related propositions and, in so doing, the cultural, social and political possibilities that ensue from urban crisis.¹⁵⁴

The happenings presented in the guide range from urban gardening by community organizations, to accidental architecture, to community festivals, to urban spelunking. In all, by focusing on the happening of this form of alternative value generation rather than critical forms of social and political engagement,¹⁵⁵ Herscher presents these projects as having what could be interpreted as a parasitic relationship to the geographic region. This relationship can be read as parasitic insofar as the guide highlights the conditions necessary for the happening of 'unreal estate,' thereby inviting the reader to conceive of the Detroit region as a site for experimentation. Moreover, this parasitic relationship is fragile insofar as it relies upon the neglect and value structure eventuated by global economic forces at this particular transitional (transient?) moment in history.

Herscher does not distinguish between one-off artist projects and sustained forms of engagement from embedded organizations and collectives. By overlooking this distinction and by focusing on the happening of 'unreal estate', Herscher abstracts many of the projects in question from the motive forces which bring them about. The point of abstraction from motive forces can be illustrated by examining two examples: the *Georgia Street Community*

¹⁵⁴ Herscher, *Guide*, 8.

¹⁵⁵ Herscher argues that these forms of engagement are present only in potential and are not essential to unreal estate per se. Further, Herscher does not offer an analysis of these emergent values, but relies on the notion that the emergent values are unique, different, or alternate to the status quo of global systematic capital.

Garden, that finds its reason for existence in the context of food shortage and a struggle to feed the families who remain on the east end of Detroit.



Figure 1.13 Georgia Street Community Garden Sign. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

The *Heidelberg Project*, which engages blight and abandonment critically by engaging the remaining community members in artistic re-imaginings of abandoned property and structures.



Figure 1.14 Heidelberg Project Shoes. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Each of these durational and critical projects is represented in the Guide by short (less than one page) descriptions. In the case of the *Georgia Street Community Garden*, Herscher presents this project vaguely as a response to "food insecurity".¹⁵⁶ The description of the *Heidelberg Project* advanced by Herscher trails off with a series of rhetorical questions while failing to mention that at the point of publication of the *Guide* this project had been ongoing for twenty eight years.¹⁵⁷ Entries of this sort are presented alongside one-off projects that engage in tourist activities like ruin exploration (urban spelunking) trips and artists who buy a single house in Detroit in order to engage in a dramatic one year

¹⁵⁶ See: Herscher, *Guide*, 48.

¹⁵⁷ See: Herscher, *Guide*, 107.

artistic renovation, thereby leaving the property abandoned at the conclusion of the endeavour.

By neglecting the important distinction between creative urban revitalization projects and creative opportunism, Herscher reveals that his interests do not align with the interests of those engaged with producing many of the phenomena which his project studies. Since this book mimics the form of a travel book, its form can easily be read and interpreted as an invitation to creative opportunists to descend upon the city.¹⁵⁸ Generally, Herscher's treatment is reminiscent of the objective scientist who studies the short life cycle of mayflies. These projects are on today, but perhaps gone tomorrow. Herscher simply wants to document these happenings as an object of theoretical interest. Sure, politically, socially and culturally critical potencies exist in the conceptual and economic space that unreal estate inhabits. These potencies, Herscher argues, are not essential to unreal estate itself, and therefore they are outside his horizon of theoretical interest. I would deny the acceptability of this stance, since work in Detroit is inevitably about Detroit at least insofar as this work rests upon the history, culture, political, and economic conditions that that open up the possibility for investigating this unreal estate in the first place.

In the end, this mock-travel book offered by Herscher can only provide an incomplete list of the happening of unreal estate in order to isolate and treat some of the active potentials in this happening. As a result of the underground

¹⁵⁸ It is worthwhile to note that there has been some recent cultural push-back against such opportunism in the form of an anonymous 'no hipsters' movement. See: "No hipsters? Graffiti a sign of widening divide in Detroit neighbourhood," *Detroit News*, August 1, 2013, Accessed June 22, 2014. <http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20130801/METRO01/308010039>.

nature of many of these projects, the list is necessarily incomplete and the academic attention drawn toward these projects (as he acts as an unreal estate broker by writing this book) is often unwelcome. The vitality of these projects rests upon an active political and ethical engagement (the ethical and political nature of which is left ambiguous by Herscher¹⁵⁹).

Herscher intentionally distances himself from the presentation of Detroit as utopia with his theoretical and dispassionate investigation of 'unreal estate'. Much like Herron, Herscher is distanced from the region and the interests of its inhabitants, though not in terms of class considerations, but rather theoretically as an art historian. 'Unreal estate', by Herscher's account, is interesting and appears situated, though supposedly only as an object for theoretical and dispassionate investigation.

The position taken by Herscher, according to my analysis, is burdened by an overabundance of caution. All of this caution seems somewhat warranted given the sensationalism of many of the common representations of projects of this sort within the city, though this overabundance of caution as in the work of Herscher fails to fully illuminate the ethical and political capacities latent within such a city in transition, nor does it address sufficiently how these conditions are necessary conditions for the possibility of many of the very phenomena his project attempts to catalogue. In short, where Herron distances himself from the

¹⁵⁹ With a bit of generosity to Herscher, in his public lectures about this project he explains partially the theoretical distance methodologically employed. He argues that we must be careful out of a spirit of sensitivity to both the fragile natures of these happenings and to the residents themselves not to "take anything away" as we study unreal estate in Detroit, even as he acknowledges the urge to politicize these happenings. From my own experience in Detroit, the residents have a good deal of fear and distrust of researchers and reporters who "parachute in and take what they want" from the city, which is held by many to be an act of abuse.

normative consequences of his account by describing a cultural-historical phenomenon (the humiliation of history), Herscher distances himself from a full analysis of the phenomena that he studies as contributing to 'unreal estate' by abstracting this notion from the historical and material conditions that give rise to many of its catalogued art historical happenings. Herron and Herscher share a sort of normative evasiveness by means of restricting their claims to the realm of descriptive analysis. Both theorists attempt to evade the effects of the judgments necessarily implicit to their theoretical perspectives.¹⁶⁰

My intent is to reach further than Herscher while not throwing his theoretical caution to the wind. Herscher is actually very careful to note, though outside the scope of his project, that there exists a certain degree of activist potential in the happenings that he discusses. However, by failing to develop a practical and valid distinction between the brute fact of habitation of a place and the sorts of passionately engaged dispositions discussed above by Jacobs, along with Hardt and Negri, the notion of unreal estate is unable to distinguish between one-off artist experiments and sustained forms of engagement from historically and culturally embedded organizations and collectives. In what is to follow, we will develop and mobilize such a distinction in order to make explicit forms of ethical and political activism implicit within the de-industrializing cities of Windsor and Detroit. If Herron is correct when he calls Detroit "... the most representative

¹⁶⁰ Note: Nietzsche and the analysis offered in the second chapter will bring these arguments regarding implicit theoretical judgments more fully to the foreground. For now it is sufficient to note that in the positions held by both Herron and Herscher there is an element of deliberate normative evasiveness. See pp. 167-175 and pp. 228-230 below.

city in America"¹⁶¹, this investigation should also make explicit both latent capacities and modes of implicit activism present in other North American contexts as well as the structural barriers that they run up against.

Unlike the dispassionate and cautious analysis offered by Herscher, the work of the late Grace Lee Boggs, a Chinese-American activist who held a PhD in Philosophy from Bryn Mawr (1940) couches the latent capacities for social and political reinvention within cities like Detroit within revolutionary language and practices. Boggs resided on the East end of Detroit from 1953 until her death on October 5th, 2015. Boggs was the co-founder of *Detroit Summer* and the Boggs Foundation and Educational Centre, which she established with her husband James Boggs. In a 2004 publication (written in 2000) about Detroit she asserts of the situation and capacities present within the city:

Up to a generation ago Detroit was a shining example of the success of American capitalism, encouraging and reinforcing the conventional wisdom that technological progress is the key to social progress... A mode of production that concentrated thousands under a single roof made it possible for workers to create the great social movement of the 1930s that established the dignity of labor... In the last twenty-five years, however, as global corporations have moved overseas or to the South where they can make more profit with cheaper labor, Detroit has become a wasteland. For the media it has become the symbol of the coming collapse of American urban civilization - "the first domino to fall" as Diane Sawyer put it on a national network special ten years ago. ... Detroit's population which was 2 million in the 1950s now hovers around or below the million mark. Physically the city is more devastated than Dresden, Berlin and Tokyo after the massive bombings of World War II. ... Many of the institutional structures that remain are fenced in or gated and in most neighborhoods people live behind triple locked doors and barred windows. ... Under these circumstances, it would be easy to abandon all hope for Detroit's future - or to be satisfied with pseudo-solutions like casinos and luxury sports stadia... Yet precisely because physical devastation on such a huge scale boggles the mind, it also frees the imagination, especially of activists/artists/artisans, to perceive reality anew; to see vacant lots not as eyesores but as empty spaces inviting the viewer to fill them in with other forms, other structures that presage a new kind of city which will embody and nurture new life-affirming values in sharp contrast to the values of Materialism, Individualism and Competition that have brought us to this denouement.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 9.

¹⁶² Grace Lee Boggs, "One thing leads to another: Cooperative Developments in Urban Communities," in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt, comp. Berlin: Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Germany: Federal Cultural Foundation, 2004), 102-103.

What should first be evident from this passage is the perspective from which it is taken up. Boggs writes about, in the interest of, and for the residents within the struggling neighbourhoods within the city. From what we have already seen from Herron, Herscher, LeDuff, and Leary above, there is little that is factually new in this passage. Boggs here relates a story of the rise and fall of a city, as do the other authors discussed above. Like LeDuff, she describes the city as a 'wasteland'. Like Herron, Boggs is bemused about what Herron called in his University of Windsor HRG presentation "elephant footprint projects" like stadia that concentrate development funds within the downtown core leaving neighbourhoods to falter. Like Leary, she is both cautious and troubled by the dominant tendencies for the representation of Detroit by the national media. Most interestingly and importantly, like Herscher she sees the potential within the blighted landscape of vacant lots to engage the imagination in order to bring about something new and enigmatic in terms of values alien to the dominant corporate and political climate. This something, she holds, may bring about a new sort of city and, as she later writes, in *The Next American Revolution*, new sorts of human beings by means of a radical revolution of values. She states:

These are the times that try our souls. Each of us needs to undergo a tremendous philosophical and spiritual transformation. Each of us needs to be awakened to a personal and compassionate recognition of the inseparable interconnection between our minds, hearts, and bodies; between our physical and psychical well-being; and between our selves and all the other selves in our country and in the world. Each of us needs to stop being a passive observer of the suffering that we know is going on in the world and start identifying with the sufferers. Each of us needs to make a leap that is both practical and philosophical, beyond determinism to self-determination. Each of us has to be true to and enhance our own humanity by embracing and practicing the conviction that as human beings we have Free Will.

Despite the powers and principles that are bent on objectifying and commodifying us and all our human relationships, the interlocking crises of our time require that we exercise the power within us to make principled choices in our ongoing daily and political lives - choices

that will eventually although not inevitably (since there are no guarantees) make a difference.¹⁶³

In an earlier work, *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century*, Grace and James Boggs take great pains to define 'revolution,' and they do so in terms of the evolutionary development of humanity. Cautioning against the common tendency to think of revolutions only in terms of revolutionary moments or brute forms of purely conflictive revolt, they write:

There is an urgent necessity today to combat the widespread tendency, propagated by the mass media, to think of revolution in terms of a single tactical event or episode, as a D-Day confrontation or shoot-out between the violence of the state and the violence of the oppressed. The idea which most of us have of revolution, encouraged by the FBI as well, is that of barricades, a Wild West shoot-out, an assault upon a police headquarters or even hijacking an airplane or robbing a bank. Most people, including most militants, think of a revolution in terms of "Instant Revolution", rather than in terms of a protracted struggle. Revolution to them is one confrontation after another. They have not stopped to wonder about the advance in human evolution which is the only justification for a revolution and which can only be achieved when the great masses of the people at the bottom of a society make a tremendous leap forward in their own humanity.¹⁶⁴

Calling for a philosophy of revolution, they proceed to lay out the general framework for a definition of the term 'revolution' in distinction, in terms of what it is not. Revolution, they argue, is fundamentally distinct from *rebellion*, *insurrection*, *revolt*, or a *coup d'état*. *Rebellions* are spontaneous and hold no intentions on the part of the rebels to take state power. *Insurrections*, while they have the intention of taking state power, represent a single event as the culmination of revolutionary struggle. *Revolts*, Boggs and Boggs argue, are attempts ("...usually by a section of the armed forces..."¹⁶⁵) to seize power, though they lack both prior organization of the masses and social objectives. They characterize the *coup d'état* as "the successful overthrow of existing

¹⁶³ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 33-34.

¹⁶⁴ James and Grace Lee Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Monthly Review, 1974), 15-16.

¹⁶⁵ Boggs and Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution*, 16.

authority in one audacious stroke, usually by a section of the armed forces."¹⁶⁶ In each case, we find that these distinct sorts of defiant act differ fundamentally from revolution. In the case of rebellion and insurrection the power base of the drive toward political change is the masses, though the aim of rebellion is to object to power, not to seize power; and insurrection is simply the culmination of revolutionary struggle. *Revolt* and *coup d'état* do not usually find their power base in an oppressed class or the masses. In all of these cases, the act of defiance to power is characterized as a brief moment of a single act.

Boggs and Boggs characterize revolution as rooted deeply within the cultural mindset, not as a moment of brute negation of the existing power structure, and as a protracted struggle toward a new way of life. They claim:

Revolutionary thinking has as its purpose to discover where man/woman should be tomorrow so that we can struggle systematically and programmatically to arouse the great masses of the people to want to go there.¹⁶⁷

Decisively distinct from the dominant modes of re-imagining de-industrializing cities that take economic power structures as givens, Boggs and Boggs frame this historical moment of transition to be an opportunity to effect a radical revaluation of values that projects a future out of a moment of crisis. Couching the forces at work in evolutionary terms and in a notion of agency, the revolutionary capacities highlighted by Boggs and Boggs stem not from a generalized and abstract understanding of a political and economic landscape, but rather from the creative and moral capacities of engaged communities

¹⁶⁶ Boggs and Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution*, 16.

¹⁶⁷ Boggs and Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution*, 18-19.

expressing and expanding their consciousness and powers experimentally within the context of a protracted struggle. They continue:

A revolution is not just for the purpose of correcting past injustices. A revolution involves a projection of man/ woman into the future. It begins with projecting the notion of a more human human being, i.e., a human being who is more advanced in the specific qualities which only human beings have - creativity, consciousness, and self-consciousness, a sense of political and social responsibility.¹⁶⁸

The work of Grace Boggs is in explicit dialogue with that of Hardt and Negri, sharing their notion of the political capacities resting on the common and the potential political power expressed in terms of the multitude. She states:

But in the twenty-first century I have come to appreciate (in the words of authors Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri) the value of the "singularities" that compose the "multitude." Our diversity is the source of our strength. We are not aiming simply to impact one election or one government. Rather, we are striving for long-term and sustainable transformation, and for that we need the wisdom that comes from many cultures, movements, and traditions.¹⁶⁹

Specifically, the work of Grace Lee Boggs in the context of Detroit involves engaging the informal networks of needs-based community organizations and artist collectives, bringing them into dialogue in order to collectively "...envision the new cultural images we need to grow our souls."¹⁷⁰ These networks are inclusive stressing a multiplicity of voices from a multitude of backgrounds, involving anybody who wishes to take up a share of the project rather than being exclusive and divided along the lines of race, gender, or class. Given Boggs and Boggs' associations with the Black Power movement in Detroit as well as their friendships and collaboration with figures like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcom X, it may be surprising to some not to find a divisive dialogue involving race and discrimination. Boggs and Boggs acknowledge that race and

¹⁶⁸ Boggs and Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution*, 19.

¹⁶⁹ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 131.

¹⁷⁰ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 36.

discrimination are issues, but issues best addressed and overcome on the basis of the common. Grace Boggs argues:

Blacks overall regard Martin and certainly Malcom with greater reverence and depth of feeling. But, regrettably, they have not wrestled with the full complexity of the ideas and lives of these two men who have played such a critical role in the development of the American Revolutionary movement. As a result, contemporary African American politicians and public intellectuals have summarily failed to do what Martin and Malcom (and Jimmy Boggs) did in their lifetimes - namely move the debates and strategies about black struggle beyond the fight against racism to address the broader concern of how to transform and how to govern the whole of US society. Every American needs a full appreciation of Martin and Malcom to contribute to making the next American Revolution.¹⁷¹

The sort of inclusivity suggested by Boggs is striking insofar as it respects the distinctiveness of various classes, races, and interest groups and brings them together on the basis of what is shared or 'common' in terms of their struggles against the belligerent power structures. These belligerent power structures, as we saw above with Hardt and Negri, work against, frustrate, block, and stifle the productive and cooperative networks of the common. This is an interesting and potent aspect of Boggs position, a position that grew out of a relationship with the black power movement in Detroit. We saw above¹⁷² with our treatment of Hardt and Negri how the notions of encounter, singularities, and the common work together to issue powerful normative claims and "...organize antagonisms against the hierarchies and divisions of the metropolis..."¹⁷³ These positions argued by Boggs, Hardt, and Negri, explicitly recognize diversity and distinctions such as race and class, although they do not organize their models of resistance along these categorical or hierarchical distinctions. Questions of race, gender, class, and other forms of oppressive categories do not orient revolutionary or activist struggle, at least that of the urban activist movements prevalent today in

¹⁷¹ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 82.

¹⁷² See pp. 50-54 above.

¹⁷³ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 260.

Detroit. For Boggs, the question at the heart of revolutionary struggle is not that of who wields the political power. Rather, revolutionary struggle should be one that demands of systems of power and economy that they allow for the expression of human capacities applying a model of human, and not merely economic or procedural, sustainability. The role of activist and revolutionary practice, as outlined by Boggs, is to demand that systems of power (to borrow from Horkheimer and Adorno) pay heed to "...the interests of men."¹⁷⁴

This notion of political and cultural relations that are humanly sustainable will be central as we examine the projects of activist communities in Windsor and Detroit in what follows. Boggs' argument attempts to overcome what she considers to be the limitations of "...twentieth century theory and practice of revolution..."; theory and practice bound by "...ideologies, purist paradigms, absolutist views of a static Paradise; arguments over which class, race or gender was the main revolutionary social force; and binary oppositions between Left and Right."¹⁷⁵ Such revolutionary theory and practice dwells in the negative and employs an 'us' versus 'them' opposition that mimics, as Boggs argues, "...the capitalist culture that was dehumanizing us."¹⁷⁶

Boggs describes the disposition of the movement she hopes for not in terms of isolated issues, ideological paradigms, or oppositional forces that orient struggle. Rather, her position rests on the notion of the 'common' and attempts to

¹⁷⁴ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 217-218.

¹⁷⁵ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 47-48.

¹⁷⁶ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 48.

illustrate sets of dispositions necessary for sustained struggle against institutional powers that would limit and frustrate our human capacities. She writes:

...we are beginning to understand that the world is always being made and never finished; that activism can be the journey rather than the arrival; that struggle doesn't always have to be confrontational but can take the form of reaching out to find common ground with the many "others" in our society who are also seeking ways out from alienation, isolation, privatization and dehumanization by corporate globalization.¹⁷⁷

Grace Boggs understands the need to develop new dispositions to struggle (she refers to this as to "grow our souls"¹⁷⁸). She describes the disposition called for in the new struggle in terms of what she sees in the new emerging movement made up of elements of the 'civil rights movement,' the 'environmental movement,' and the 'women's movement':

...coming together in workshops to open themselves up to new, more spiritual ways of knowing, consciously decentering the scientific rationalism that had laid the philosophic foundation for the modern age. To become truly human and to really know Truth, people discovered, we need to summon up all our mental and spiritual resources, constantly expanding our imaginations, sensitivities, and capacity for wonder and love, for hope rather than despair, for compassion and cooperation rather than cynicism and competition, for spiritual aspiration and moral effort. Instead of either/or, reductive, dualistic, and divisive, or "blaming the other," thinking, the movement affirmed the unity of mind and body and of the spiritual with the material. It advocated a consciousness that rejects determinism – the belief that we are limited by the past – and repudiates all absolutes. Instead, the movement promoted a consciousness that finds joy in crossing boundaries, is naturalistic instead of supernatural, and strives for empowerment rather than power and control.¹⁷⁹

To foster these dispositions, the Boggs Educational Centre was established in reaction to a system of education which "...sorts, tracks, tests, and rejects or certifies working-class children as if they were products on an assembly line."¹⁸⁰ She describes the educational challenge as follows:

These conditions of postindustrial society especially challenge educators to reexamine conventional assumptions and to create a new community-based, person-centered model of education. Schools need to leave behind present methods geared to producing workers for highly repetitive work. They should instead seek to incorporate learning into work, political organizing, community service, and recreation. More learning needs to occur

¹⁷⁷ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 48.

¹⁷⁸ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 38.

¹⁷⁹ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 41.

¹⁸⁰ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 137.

outside the classroom. Education should involve real problem solving. Instead of rigid age segregation, young and old should mingle. The years of compulsory education should grow shorter, not longer. Education should be spread out over a lifetime.¹⁸¹

In sum, Boggs theoretical and activist work aims to foster a new sort of disposition to social, cultural and political life centered around the assertion "...we are the leaders we've been looking for."¹⁸² On the basis of such engagement, and in reaction to the fear mongering of media and political pundits, it is not difficult to see how this general track of argument works to invite a multitude of distinct voices into a dialogue of re-imagining urban life within the context of this transitional historical moment of de-industrialization.

We began this discussion with a treatment of Jane Jacobs; one that asserted that cities - good cities - need to be the sorts of places that handle strangers. The ideals that rest behind her work were feelings of safety and security, along with a cooperative sense of belonging to a place that fosters diversity within neighbourhoods and, as a result of this diversity of street uses, sufficient activities to generate interest in the lives of our streets. In sum, our cities and our communities should be laid out in order to foster a shared sense of engagement among a multiplicity of singularities on the basis of what Hardt and Negri later call the common. Jacobs, in 1961, asserts with regard to diversity and cultural life generally within Detroit:

Virtually all of urban Detroit is as weak on vitality and diversity as the Bronx. It is ring superimposed upon ring of failed gray [sic.] belts. Even Detroit's downtown itself cannot produce a respectable amount of diversity. It is dispirited and dull, and almost deserted by seven o'clock of [sic.] an evening.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 140.

¹⁸² Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 159.

¹⁸³ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 196.

Over half a century later this assessment still seems to stand despite the activities of activists and community organizers such as Boggs. What also stands, as reflected in the works of Jacobs, Boggs, and Hardt and Negri, is the assessment of the sorts of political and cultural activities along with impassioned engagement that imbues the streets with the vitality needed to produce a healthy urban landscape.

Many cultural and theoretical forces, as exemplified in the tendencies of the writings constitutive of a mythic and sensational narrative of de-industrializing cities like those discussed above, encourage the Othering of places like Detroit, encouraging dispositions that run counter to the potentially revolutionary forces discussed by Boggs. Authors like LeDuff, who depict entire swaths of the city as areas to be avoided even at great inconvenience and expense, whose works are filled with narratives that foster and encourage a passive acceptance of an impression of Detroit in which the city is beyond hope, effectively work against the common. The disposition fostered by such writings could serve to partially explain the prevalence of fences, barred windows and doors, as well as my instinct to timidly huddle within my borrowed apartment rather than to strike out to engage with Detroit. The historical analysis provided by Herron, while it will be useful in describing the emergence of the context in which we find contemporary Detroit, and insofar as it rests upon a functionalist understanding of the city serves to frustrate any potential cultural forces for re-imagining or re-evaluating within this context. Herron treats any potential return to the city, including the

various movements at work currently (both hipster and grass roots), in terms of a self-misunderstood nostalgia for a fictive history of cities generally.

We have seen, through our treatments of Jacobs, Hardt and Negri, and Boggs and Boggs, that cities are effectively screaming for residents and visitors alike to take up an active and normative relationship to the shared landscape that brings them together. Systems of consumer value as well as analyses that would remain dispassionate serve to deny this call while relying on a context for their analyses that affirms this landscape of the common implicitly. To represent a place is an act of power. However, many of the dominant treatments of the forces at work in this moment of de-industrialization run the gamut between skepticism and outright dismissal of this shared normative landscape on the basis of a system of value assessment that fails to read these activist and engaged projects in any terms except for economic. As we shall see in what follows, this tendency represents a form of question begging insofar as this mode of analysis reads radical attempts to question this very theory of value only in terms of this theory of value. The only value that these analyses are able to consider is monetary, since they are, after all, modes of analyses designed to measure monetary and economic value. Effectively, these analyses assert that critical dispositions to systems of economic value are economically problematic. Over the next two chapters we shall examine to what extent Nietzsche and some of his theoretical descendants can prove to be valuable allies for understanding the cultural forces at work in neighbourhoods within de-industrializing cities generally. From our reading of Nietzsche and others, we will also examine what

capacities are present in his work for countering these culturally fostered and generally unproductive dispositions that frame our encounters with cities like Windsor and Detroit.



Figure 1.15 *Walker Power Building Windsor*. August 10, 2016. Windsor, ON. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Nietzsche Insurgent

(A case for the reformulation and use of Nietzsche as a model for activism)

Right out of the gate it may be wondered what value a theoretical position that predates the moving automotive assembly line and one firmly rooted in European culture might have for meeting a decisively modern and North American crisis such as the one faced by the deindustrializing cities discussed in this work. Why use Nietzsche to engage with de-industrializing North American cities? Aside from the historical and technological distance that separates us from his writings it is commonly held that the writings of Nietzsche present a host of difficulties for one who would appropriate them in order to engage in any political theory involving movements within mass culture. The dominant trend in the interpretation of his position has understood Nietzsche to advocate wholeheartedly for a form of possessive and assertive individuality that runs against the grain of the forms of political association grounded in 'the common' as discussed by Hardt and Negri.¹⁸⁴ The values of safety and security that provide the foundation of the prescriptions for the establishment of 'good' cities and neighbourhoods advanced by Jacobs are contradicted on almost every page of Nietzsche's writings. Explicitly, Nietzsche asserts of the urge toward such conditions:

¹⁸⁴ See, the introduction of *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*. In his analysis of the dominant trend in interpreting Nietzsche's position with regard to the status of 'the masses', Julian Young, following Bertrand Russell's position ("...the happiness of common people is no part of the good *per se*."), responds to this "...dominant view in Anglo-American scholarship" which takes as its slogan "only the superman counts". Young ultimately argues (along with the other contributors to this publication) that reading Nietzsche against the grain of this dominant tradition "...opens up a fruitful, and largely neglected, perspective on his philosophy as a whole." Julian Young (ed.) Introduction to *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1-6.

The sage has to resist these extravagant desires of unintelligent goodness, because his concern is the continuance of his type and the eventual creation of the supreme intellect; at the least he will refrain from promoting the foundation of the 'perfect state', inasmuch as only enfeebled individuals can have any place in it. ... The state is a prudent institution for the protection of individuals against one another: if it is completed and perfected too far it will in the end enfeeble the individual and, indeed, dissolve him - that is to say, thwart the original purpose of the state in the most thorough way possible. (HH I 235)

In this section of *Human All Too Human*, Nietzsche cautions against the standards of safety, security, peace and comfort relied upon as the implicit basis for the normative evaluation presented in Jacobs *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Good cities and good neighborhoods, for Jacobs, tend to defend themselves against the very conflictive forces that Nietzsche advocates in his treatment of cultural and spiritual progress. Make no mistake; Nietzsche is in favor of conflict, danger, and even suffering by virtue of the generative effects of these forces. He notes, quite explicitly in his *Beyond Good and Evil*:

If possible (and no 'if possible' can be more crazy) you want *to abolish suffering!* And we? – it seems that we want it to be, if anything, worse and greater than before! Well-being in your sense of the word – that certainly is no goal, it seems to us to be an *end!* A condition that would immediately make people ludicrous and contemptible – make us *wish* their downfall! The discipline of suffering, *great* suffering – don't you know that this discipline *alone* has created all human greatness to date? The tension of the soul in unhappiness, which cultivates its strength; its horror at the sight of the great destruction; its inventiveness and bravery in bearing, enduring, interpreting, exploiting unhappiness, and whatever in the way of depth, mystery, mask, spirit, cleverness, greatness the heart has been granted – has it not been granted them through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering? (BGE 225)

For Nietzsche, it is conflict, suffering, and danger that impel us to become more than what we are. Since it is by these means that we expand our capacities, Nietzsche would resist the will to produce neighbourhoods of the sort discussed so romantically by Jacobs.

Hardt and Negri distinguish between 'infelicitous' encounters with the common and those judged to be 'felicitous'. Recall, 'felicitous' encounters were characterized as involving "...a new production of the common – when for

instance, people communicate their different knowledges, different capacities to form cooperatively something new.”¹⁸⁵ On the other hand, recall that Hardt and Negri note that some encounters “...are conflictive and destructive, producing noxious forms of the common, when your neighbors’ noise keeps you up at night or you smell their garbage or, more generally, when the traffic congestion and air pollution of the metropolis degrade the life of all residents.”¹⁸⁶ We should note that, for Hardt and Negri, cities are active zones of conflict since, much like the factory for the industrial proletariat, cities represent “...the site of hierarchy and exploitation, violence and suffering, fear and pain.”¹⁸⁷ Often the structures of the city itself work against, frustrate, block, and stifle the productive and cooperative networks of the common. These instances provide apt targets for urban resistance and rebellion. Accordingly, Hardt and Negri advocate political organization in order “...to organize antagonisms against the hierarchies and divisions of the metropolis, funnel the hatred and rage against its violence.”¹⁸⁸ While Hardt and Negri acknowledge that these conflictive forces exist and antagonisms should be directed against forces that block the common, the examples of noise, unpleasant odors, and bothersome traffic used in the selection from *Commonwealth* above illustrate a certain will to a pleasant and comfortable life that stands in stark contrast to the prescriptions issued by Nietzsche, for example, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, where he (comparing the human spirit to a plant) argues that it is not “...a common green pasture of

¹⁸⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 254.

¹⁸⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 255.

¹⁸⁷ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 258.

¹⁸⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 260.

happiness...” (BGE 44) that brings about the necessary conditions for human flourishing. Rather:

...the precariousness of the plant's situation had first to increase enormously; that its power of invention and disguise (its 'spirit' -) had to become subtle and daring through long periods of pressure and discipline; that its life-will had to be intensified to an unconditional power-will. (BGE 44)

Unlike the disposition championed by Nietzsche, Hardt and Negri argue that the politics of the metropolis has the task of organizing encounters “...to promote joyful encounters, make them repeat, and to minimize infelicitous encounters.”¹⁸⁹ Again, Nietzsche argues in *Human, All Too Human* that “...this comfortable life would destroy the soil out of which great intellect and the powerful individual in general grows...” (HH I 235) insisting “...that savage and violent character of life...” (HH I 235) is the operative force that brings about greatness in the individual, people, or culture. One might argue, as I have above¹⁹⁰, that organizing culturally and politically against these noxious encounters and directing our legitimate rage against them has the potential to bring about the sorts of new capacities that Nietzsche would praise. Indeed, the notion of a ‘joyful encounter’ could be read as being very much in keeping with the affirmation of life advocated so vehemently by Nietzsche. Problematically, however, it is all too easy to read the general thrust of the argument presented by Hardt and Negri as one that calls for the ultimate cessation and overcoming of conflictive forces themselves, insofar as their normative criticisms rest on the basis of the ideal of free and unrestrained communicative capacities rooted in the common. In any case, it is not immediately clear that the normative standards

¹⁸⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 255.

¹⁹⁰ See pp. 53-54 above.

resting in the common as advocated by Hardt and Negri are compatible with the embrace of agonistic forces championed by Nietzsche. The cooperative standards of the common rest upon what Nietzsche would estimate to be "...the easy *communicability* of necessity...", about which he notes:

The more similar, the more common people: these have always been and continue to be at an advantage, while those who are more select, subtle, rare, harder to understand are readily left alone, come to harm in their isolation, and rarely procreate. We have to call upon enormous counterforces in order to thwart this natural, all-too-natural *progressus in simile*, the further development of humans who are similar, ordinary, average, herd-like – *common*. (BGE 268)

For Nietzsche, that which is common, (including anything that can be considered a 'common good'), has little value.¹⁹¹ Generally, then, Nietzsche would reject this standard of the common, along with the easy communicability that makes something like the common possible. On the contrary, Nietzsche estimates that which is common to be an act of preservation and continuation of sameness rather than progress. Unless we are willing to read Hardt and Negri as arguing for the highest and rarest expression of communicative capacities on the basis of the common which amounts to reading a form of communicative and expressive elitism into Hardt and Negri.¹⁹² Nietzsche, by championing the exceptional would seem to be arguing against the grain of the common as expressed by the multitude.

From the venom of Nietzsche's description of the State in Zarathustra,¹⁹³ to Book III of Daybreak, where Nietzsche in "As little state as possible"¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ "...anything that is common never has much value." (BGE 43)

¹⁹² There may be good reason to read Hardt and Negri in this manner, though the democratic ideal (as theoretically rich and nuanced as it is in their work) would seem (again) to cut against this interpretation. (See pp. 243-254 below.)

¹⁹³ "State I call it where all drink poison, the good and the wicked; state, where all lose themselves, the good and the wicked; state, where the slow suicide of all is called 'life.'" (Z "On the New Idol.")

denounces the subjects of politics and economy as unworthy of the attention of those most gifted, always and everywhere in his position we seem to find Nietzsche to be dismissive in the extreme of shared standards of value, the public good, the well-being of the masses, or any other stance that resembles in any way the common. Further, in the early work *Untimely Meditations*, Nietzsche identifies only three respects in which the masses are worthy of any note at all; all of which relate back to either their resistance or utility to "...great men..."¹⁹⁵ It seems to most that Nietzsche rejects the grounds for peaceful cooperation and collaboration that serve as the normative basis for the arguments in favor of collective or community action that we have examined so far. How, then, is this iconoclast and critic to offer any allegiance or hope for this investigation? On what basis can we align the critical and prescriptive force of Nietzsche's writings with the goals of grass root community activist movements in the deindustrializing cities of Windsor and Detroit?

Even though the writings of Nietzsche are critically directed against all forms of mass culture (and his cynicism with regard to the multitude of his day was extreme), if we take a step back from this cynicism we will find something quite surprising. Always and everywhere at the root of the criticisms of the state, mass culture, systems of belief, systems of knowledge, and systems generally, we find that the ire of Nietzsche is evoked in response to the attempt to offload

¹⁹⁴ "Political and economic affairs are not worthy of being the enforced concern of society's most gifted spirits: such a wasteful use of the spirit is at bottom worse than having none at all." (D 179)

¹⁹⁵ "The masses seem to me to deserve notice in three respects only: first as faded copies of great men produced on poor paper with worn-out plates, then as a force of resistance to great men, finally as instruments in the hands of great men; for the rest, let the Devil and statistics take them!" (UM II 9)

critical thought and critical dispositions to the processes of route and procedure. By his argument, the offloading of critical dispositions to systems, including systems of dogmatic belief, procedural systems, bureaucratic systems, political systems, epistemological systems, etc. flies in the face of the forms of creative agency and engagement with the concrete struggles that existence presents.¹⁹⁶

For Nietzsche, it is not the systems of belief or systems of practice themselves that pose a problem, but rather it is the languid cultural reliance upon such systems (epistemic, procedural, economic, metaphysical, etc.) that evinces a will not to will, or nihilism. The target of the critique offered by Nietzsche is ultimately not the multitude itself. Rather, Nietzsche decries passive dispositions expressed by herd-like manners of living and believing; dispositions that Nietzsche detects in the practices of the multitude of his day. The prescriptions offered by Nietzsche aim at reinvigorating and re-spiriting a culture that is on a trajectory of decline.

One of the tasks for this chapter will be to encounter and overturn what Rick Roderick calls 'the Nietzsche effect'. Roderick argues, in his lecture "Nietzsche as Myth and Mythmaker", that when we move to interpret Nietzsche we run into a number of paradoxes: paradoxes generated within his writing¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ See TI "Maxims and Barbs" 26: "I mistrust all systematists and avoid them. The will to system is a lack of integrity."

¹⁹⁷ Rick Roderick, "Nietzsche and the Postmodern Condition: Nietzsche as Myth and Mythmaker," (Video lecture with transcript recorded for The Teaching Company, Virginia, 1991), Accessed May 15, 2016. <http://rickroderick.org/201-nietzsche-as-myth-and-mythmaker-1991/>, "...Nietzsche will suggest that morality has an immoral origin, that rationality has an irrational origin, that truth has its origin in fiction, and so on. So those are the paradoxes that we will deal with within the text of Nietzsche. Those are paradoxes that any interpretation of Nietzsche would have to address. Any interpretation of his work would have to address those... and my task of doing a course on Nietzsche would be difficult enough if I just had to address those. Those are tough."

and “the paradox generated... by his writing instead of the paradoxes within it.”¹⁹⁸

This second paradox is, in the context of the deployment of Nietzsche towards activist theory that can address the practice of community organizations and artist collectives proposed here, much more interesting. Roderick argues that the works of Nietzsche call into question the possibility of any ‘correct’ or ‘right’ interpretation generally. In this 1991 lecture, Roderick claims that the “...effect generated by his writings; that interpretations are multiple, contestable, and might finally be judged by which end up being the most interesting.”¹⁹⁹ This is to say, the works of Nietzsche (by the account offered by Roderick) beg precisely for the kind of deployment that this work attempts to offer. Roderick continues:

Nietzsche’s work suggests that, in a certain sense, it may be impossible to find what many people think they find when they interpret; namely “the right interpretation”. One of Nietzsche’s primary targets is the notion that there is such a thing as “the right interpretation”, in general. See that’s what makes it a theoretical point. However, the paradox now is obvious, right? Because the paradox generated by his writings... if that thesis suggested by his writings were correct then the ideal way to present Nietzsche would not be to present an interpretation of Nietzsche; but to do what he suggests in other places in his work, which is to develop a creative, brilliant performance of one’s own. That sort of created oneself in a new way and if one used Nietzsche’s name it wouldn’t matter whether one – well, it might matter, if it made the performance better – in what way one used it.²⁰⁰

This is not to argue that the works of Nietzsche are irrelevant to the argument that follows. On the contrary, as we shall see in what follows, Nietzsche is frequently quite clear as he isolates cultural phenomena for critical appraisal, as he asserts his criticisms, and as he establishes modes of critique and analysis. Nietzsche consistently grounds these critical modes on the basis of the affirmation of life, the expression and expansion of human capacities, and he establishes agonistic tensions that frame the living development of both cultural

¹⁹⁸ Roderick, “Nietzsche as Myth and Mythmaker,” Accessed May 15, 2016.

¹⁹⁹ Roderick, “Nietzsche as Myth and Mythmaker,” Accessed May 15, 2016.

²⁰⁰ Roderick, “Nietzsche as Myth and Mythmaker,” Accessed May 15, 2016.

practice and individual development. Nietzsche offers a dispositional critique of cultural practice in a manner that is rooted historically, topologically, and firmly articulated in terms of context and location.

The first chapter in this work concluded with an account of activism in Detroit developed using Boggs, and Hardt and Negri that aims to foster new sorts of dispositions to social, cultural and political life. Hardt and Negri offer an account of the communicative and collaborative networks capable of self-organizing in a critical manner toward systems of power. Boggs advocates institutions and practices (cultural, educational, etc.) that aim to bring these dispositions about experimentally through community engagement. Both positions maintain a critical disposition to systems of power, domination, and exploitation that block the expression of human capacities for communication and collaboration. These revolutionary thinkers aim to bring about what Nietzsche would call "...a *critique* of moral values..." that calls "...*the value of these values ... into question.*" (GM "Preface" 6) One thing that is lacking in the accounts of activism offered by the works of both Boggs and Hardt and Negri is direct engagement with the psychological struggle with our habitual dispositions, and valuations, and generally, the affective dimension of engagement with struggle of this sort. The works of Nietzsche can be productive and serve as valuable allies on this front.

We will first have to linger upon an interpretation of the projects of the various writings of Nietzsche; an interpretation that presents Nietzsche as ultimately advocating a form of activism at the levels of knowledge, subjectivity,

culture, and (more tenuously) politics. This interpretation will be philosophically dense and heavily reliant on the theorists Christopher Janaway and John Richardson, though ultimately rewarding for the analysis of embedded and embodied activist resistance treated in the following chapters. Topically, this interpretation of Nietzsche will engage his positions regarding the nature of subjectivity and his rather complicated notion of agency, our epistemological situation, and an account of his engagement with culture which stresses the importance of topology or place that grounds thinking. Ultimately, on the basis of this interpretation I shall argue that Nietzsche advocates a disposition of (epistemic, cultural, political, and ethical) *insurgency* with regard to the structures and systems that we of necessity inhabit and embody through our engagement with life.

If Nietzsche is to be useful to the present case, this interpretation must be situated perspectively within the context of the de-industrializing cities of Windsor and Detroit and the struggles of the activist and community groups at work at street level in these cities. At this point the expanded appropriation of Nietzsche (taken alongside Hardt and Negri, Horkheimer and Adorno) will be brought into conversation with the activist prescriptions and evaluations of Boggs and Boggs, who argue that "...we must have a philosophy of revolution"²⁰¹. This is precisely what this chapter aims to produce: the grounds required to engage a discussion of artist, activist and community practice within Windsor and Detroit.

2.1 Nietzsche: Context and Topology

²⁰¹ Boggs and Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution*, 15.

The works of Nietzsche become most lucid when read in relation to cultural crisis. Much of the normative force of works like *Human, All Too Human*, *The Gay Science*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *Twilight of the Idols* emerge with the explicit project of "...overturning of habitual evaluations and valued habits..." (HH "Preface" 1) framed critically and rhetorically as "...a great declaration of war..." (TI "Foreword") reliant upon "...a splendid tension of spirit..." (BGE "Preface") Each of these explicit mission statements for his work are reliant upon the historical context in which they are written and are only properly understood in terms of the specific cultural forces that they oppose.

Nietzsche challenges us in his work to think against the grain of the dominant cultural mindsets and habitual beliefs that tend to offer us comfort. When we read Nietzsche, we should be unsettled. *The Gay Science* invites us into this work with the following rhyme:

Dare to taste my fare, dear diner!
Come tomorrow it tastes finer
and day after day even good!
If you still want more – I'll make it,
from past inspiration take it,
turning food for thought to food. (GS 1)

While Nietzsche notes that this form of critical wisdom may seem bitter and foreign to us at first, day by day we will acquire a taste for these new and acrimonious forms of thought. Overall, the philosophy of Nietzsche presents the reader with the necessity for the abandonment of the dominant fundamental beliefs and habitual values of his day that, by his account, fundamentally and habitually run counter to our psychological and physiological interests.²⁰²

²⁰² See HH I 224: "The danger facing these strong communities founded on similarly constituted, firm-charactered individuals is that of the gradually increasing inherited stupidity such as haunts

According to the arguments presented by Nietzsche, these conventionally held values and beliefs would present our weaknesses as though they are strengths, encouraging us to passively accept unacceptable states of affairs and to wallow in dispositions toward life that fundamentally deny life.²⁰³ Beliefs can have narcotic effects.²⁰⁴ While these values that are the target of ire in the works of Nietzsche at their roots deny life, they conceal these roots with intoxicating compensatory powers that celebrate and reward our docility and herd-like dispositions. The initially bitter pill of Nietzsche's philosophy, in criticizing these beliefs and dispositions, is eventually intended to restore health and creative vitality.

In general, the weight of Nietzsche's critical position does not engage the veracity of our modes of analysis. The problematic values isolated for criticism by Nietzsche arise from our habitual dispositions and they are symptoms of some physiological ailment.²⁰⁵ The criticism offered by Nietzsche goes much deeper than veracity, unmasking our modes of analysis as modes of value judgment, and value judgments as reflective of dispositions towards life. He seeks to ask of the judgments that underlie these modes of analysis: "...to what extent the

all stability like its shadow.", GM Pref. 6: "What if there existed a symptom of regression in the 'good man', likewise a danger, a temptation, a poison, a narcotic, by means of which the present were living *at the expense of the future*?"

²⁰³ See GM 1 13: "Let us be different from the evil, that is, good! And the good man is one who refrains from violation, who harms no one, who attacks no one, who fails to retaliate, who leaves revenge to God, who lives as we do in seclusion, who avoids all evil and above all asks little of life, as we do, the patient, the humble, the just.' When listened to coldly and without prejudice, this actually means nothing more than: 'We weak men are, after all, weak; it would be good if we refrained from doing anything *for which we lack sufficient strength*.'"

²⁰⁴ See GM "Preface" 6: "What if there existed a symptom of regression in the 'good man', likewise a danger, a temptation, a poison, a narcotic, by means of which the present were living *at the expense of the future*?"

²⁰⁵ See TI, "The Problem of Socrates" 2: "...it shows rather that they themselves ...shared some physiological attribute, and because of this adopted the same negative attitude to life — had to adopt it."

judgment furthers life, preserves life, preserves the species, perhaps even cultivates the species..."(BGE 4) Judgments of value concerning life, according to Nietzsche's famous pronouncement in *Twilight of the Idols*, "...have value only as symptoms. They can be considered only as symptoms – in themselves such judgments are foolish." (TI "The Problem of Socrates" 2)

Many interpretations of Nietzsche treat his work abstractly and topically, ignoring the importance of a sense of place and context that underlies his more critical assertions.²⁰⁶ Taking, for example, the commonly held opposition of individual and community,²⁰⁷ we find that this opposition is supported by context and constitutes a tension that is productive of "...a man, a people, a culture..." (UM II 1) for Nietzsche. It is noteworthy that Nietzsche, when describing these tensions, frequently oscillates between these terms. As Malpas notes:

...the supposed opposition between community and individual is itself the result of a reading of Nietzsche that abstracts his thinking from the topography in which it is embedded (and that is embedded in it), and thereby renders his thinking in a way that neglects or ignores its essentially dynamic and interactive or 'agonistic' character.²⁰⁸

Moreover, as Malpas argues, Nietzsche's works are peppered with references to physical geography and they often reflect on the sense of place that grounds his philosophy. Malpas draws our attention to this particularly telling passage from *Ecce Homo*, where Nietzsche draws attention to the importance of

²⁰⁶ In his "We Hyperboreans," Jeff Malpas notes the lack of research that treats substantively the notion of topology by interpreters of Nietzsche. He notes that David Krell and Donald Bates in their *The Good European* (a work that purports to undertake a topological analysis of Nietzsche's principal works), tend to treat "...the topographic in Nietzsche as essentially background." See: Jeff Malpas, "We Hyperboreans", in *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 198.

²⁰⁷ This opposition, for most, supports the oppositional dyad of public as opposed to private that we, in the first chapter, saw both Jacobs and Hardt and Negri challenge in their discussions of streets and sidewalks, and more generally with the notion of the common. See section 1.1 above.

²⁰⁸ Malpas, "We Hyperboreans", 196.

place and climate, along with nutrition and recuperation as "...the fundamental concerns of life itself..." (EH "Clever" 10):

The question of place and climate is most closely related to the question of nutrition. Nobody is at liberty to live everywhere; and whoever has to solve great problems that challenge all his strength actually has a very restricted choice in this matter. The influence of climate on the *metabolism*, its retardation, its acceleration, goes so far that a mistaken choice of place and climate can not only estrange a man from his task but can actually keep it from him: he never gets to see it. (EH "Clever" 2)

Nietzsche is a thinker who is far from being detached from his surroundings, who argues that (as Malpas notes) it is important to "...find a location attuned not only to his physical but also to his mental and spiritual needs."²⁰⁹ Far from merely being a metaphor, place for Nietzsche is important physically, linguistically, epistemologically, and existentially. Nietzsche, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, reveals that linguistic understanding depends upon experiences held in common by "...people [who] have lived for a long time under similar conditions (of climate, soil, danger, necessities, work)..." (BGE 268) As a result of sharing these conditions people can share a series of meaning contexts that bring about a shared identity and make communicability easy and swift. Or, as Nietzsche puts it, "...something comes into being as a result, something that 'goes without saying', a people." (BGE 268) As Malpas notes:

...the topographic has its origins precisely in the refusal of the separation of thought from its object or of the thinker from her environment. Moreover, it is not as metaphor that place - or earth or landscape - comes to figure as central in a genuinely topographic mode of philosophizing, but as *place*, as that in which thinking is grounded, by which thinking is sustained, and to which thinking both opens up and to which it is itself opened.²¹⁰

Place, as we have already noted in the first chapter, is much more than an abstraction or metaphor for Nietzsche. In the section of *Ecce Homo* cited above Nietzsche recounts the gradual emergence of his awareness of the importance of

²⁰⁹ Malpas, "We Hyperboreans," 195.

²¹⁰ Malpas, "We Hyperboreans," 199-200.

these "...petty concerns – nutrition, location, climate, recuperation, the whole casuistry of selfishness..." in a manner that advocates an active call for "...people ...to start *re-educating* themselves." (EH "Clever" 10) To engage with your physical, cultural, and geographical context is already to engage yourself. For Nietzsche, this engagement with yourself does not take the form of taking up the identity imposed by your location, climate, etc.; but rather, it involves taking up a self-regulatory and self-critical disposition that expresses an understanding of how place, climate, and intellectual and nutritional diet, contribute to "...how you become what you are." (EH "Clever" 9)²¹¹ Malpas, against theorists like Gunzel (who argues that "...only *theoretical* landscapes can give us maps of Nietzsche's critical geography..."²¹²), correctly insists:

...interconnecting... geography and history is not merely inscribing of geographic tropes into historical writing, but more than this, a rethinking of the underlying ontology of the historical and the geographic. No longer is the historical to be thought apart from geography, or geography apart from history; rather the two are bound together in the same dynamic interplay.²¹³

²¹¹ It is important to briefly note that Nietzsche's own disposition to place, given that he moved around between resort towns choosing his living and writing locations to suit his character and personal preferences, more closely resembles the practices advocated by Richard Florida than the forms of engagement advocated by theorists like Jacobs or Boggs. Florida argues: "As the most mobile people in human history, we are fortunate to have an incredibly diverse menu of places – in our own countries and around the world – from which to choose. That's important because each of us has different needs and preferences. Luckily, places differ as much as we do." (Richard Florida, *Who's Your City?*, 10.) Rather than an argument supporting engagement with your place, in Florida we find an argument that would have us choose a place to live in the same manner we choose a menu item at a restaurant, since "What we need from a place also shifts with each stage of our life." (Richard Florida, *Who's Your City?*, 10.) Happily, though, the argument I offer is a forceful reinterpretation of Nietzsche rather than a faithful appropriation of the letter of his work. This interpretation asks the reader to explore hypothetically the 'what if' associated with how Nietzsche would explore the sort of engagement with and commitment to place this work examines rather than advocating Nietzsche's own Florida-esque attitudes. Further, this 'what if' holds the promise of a theoretically rich treatment of Nietzsche's new category of philosopher. Moreover, as I have argued along with Herron, Herscher, and Boggs above (see sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) and will continue to argue in what follows, Detroit presents a unique and potent locale from which to engage in the critical and normative work that Nietzsche identifies as the task for his new philosopher.

²¹² Stephan Gunzel, "Nietzsche's Geophilosophy", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 25 (Spring, 2003), 82.

²¹³ Malpas, "We Hyperboreans", 201.

Any interpretation of Nietzsche must take seriously the importance of geography within his thought. Moreover, attempts to appropriate and deploy Nietzschean thought must not interpret Nietzsche merely thematically or abstractly. Rather, the interpreter must engage with a re-contextualization of his thought not only in terms of cultural or historical context, but in terms of a sense of geographical place as well.

With regard to the project at hand, it is important to note that the disposition to topology and affective dispositions arising from geographical context for Nietzsche, should not be one of passive reception. As we shall see, self-genealogy or more generally, the genealogically rooted appraisal of the value of values offered by Nietzsche demands a critical appraisal of that which is imparted to us by any context – including the context of local (landscapes and places). This critical disposition, for Nietzsche, is grounded in an appraisal of values that demands the affirmation of life and rooted in a perspective of the furtherance of the species. With these evaluative standards, the dispositional critique offered by Nietzsche will cut deeply against calcified cultural practices that encourage us to merely seek individual material gain while instilling a disposition of passivity with regard to the acceptance of the emergent values within a geographic region. Far from arguing that we should simply carry the standard proper to our geographic (or cultural, or political) context, the strong normative and dispositional requirement issued by Nietzsche is that we adopt an *insurgent* stance to that which arises within us as a result of context. Simply put, Nietzsche would have us passionately and critically engage with our context. In

the case of the deindustrializing cities Windsor and Detroit, this context involves an urban environment dominated by the crumbling concrete, buildings blighted by arson, and the rusted metal of disused factories as well as a host of historically rooted practices and presuppositions held over from a century of industry. The explicit activism espoused by Boggs and Boggs is embodied at street level by impassioned forms of engagement with the specific trials of urban life in the context of crumbling concrete and dormant industrial sites being reclaimed by nature. As with Boggs and Boggs, what Nietzsche asks of us is not something easy. What was needed in the context of a cultural crisis like the one Nietzsche faced over a century ago had less to do with changes to our material conditions and more to do with how at root we engage with and dispose ourselves to the ongoing struggle that life represents. Both as individual human beings and as a species, Nietzsche expects us to engage with the question of the value of values rather than merely ape or imitate those values and judgments that are handed to us through dominant cultural forces.²¹⁴ In Boggs' words, this project is one that needs to "...go beyond usual politics..." and asks us to "...undergo a mental and spiritual re-evaluation."²¹⁵ Interpreted through Martin Luther King Jr., she calls this project "a revolution of values."²¹⁶ As we will see, the projects of activists, artist collectives, and community leaders in Detroit, like Nietzsche, explicitly ask us to engage with this project of revaluation – one that asks us to realize that our ideals and values have narcotic effects, and one that

²¹⁴ "The *disillusioned man speaks* – I was looking for great human beings; I only ever found the *apes* of their ideal." (Nietzsche, TI, "Maxims and Arrows" 10)

²¹⁵ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 92.

²¹⁶ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 92.

demands that we become more than what we are as we create new ways of living and valuing. In their early work, *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century*, Boggs and Boggs note of the revolution called for presently:

The revolution to be made in the United States will be the first revolution in history to require the masses to make material sacrifices rather than to acquire more material things. We must give up many of the things which this country has enjoyed at the expense of damning over one-third of the world into the state of underdevelopment, ignorance, disease, and early death. Until the revolutionary forces come to power here, this country will not be safe for the world and revolutionary warfare on an international scale against the United States will remain the wave of the present – unless all of humanity goes up in one big puff.²¹⁷

Clearly these demands are going to require more than a change in leaders or political systems – they are going to require a dispositional or spiritual revaluation. As Grace Boggs frequently notes, it is not as though someone else is going to come along like a messiah to lead us from bondage. Rather “...we are the leaders we are looking for.”²¹⁸ Or, rather, we must become such leaders. The deindustrialization of the Windsor/Detroit region presents us with an opportunity to radically revision the way that this region sustains and expresses itself. As distinct as Windsor and Detroit may be from one another, Windsorites and Detroiters share this context, its trials, and the opportunities afforded by a waning automotive industry. Granted, there are powerful economic forces attempting to re-draw the landscape and the sensibilities of this region. Regardless, Nietzsche, calling to us from historical distance along with Boggs from the perspective of embedded activism, demand that we engage with how our landscape and lived sensibilities are being re-drawn and revalued.

²¹⁷ Boggs and Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution*, 140.

²¹⁸ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 178.

While the values that Nietzsche confronted were largely those stemming from an advanced and wavering Christianity, the new gods that Boggs claims must be confronted through engaged activist practice are economic.



Figure 6.1 *Gravel piles along Detroit waterfront, viewed from Windsor Sculpture Park. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.*

She encapsulates the crisis as follows:

The Empire of Money seeks to impose the logic and practice of capital on everything, to turn every living being, the Earth, our communities, and all our human relationships into commodities to be bought and sold on the market. It seeks to destroy everything that human beings have created: cultures, languages, memories, ideas, dreams, love, and respect for one another. It even destroys the material basis for the nation state that Western societies created in the nineteenth century to protect us, if only marginally, from the forces of money.²¹⁹

These are the values and systems of logic found to be hostile to life at street level in de-industrializing and transitional cities like Windsor and Detroit. Understood in terms of performed critical activism in response to, rather than merely framed

²¹⁹ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 75-76.

in terms of "...the logic and practice of capital..."²²⁰, the projects in motion at the grass roots level in Detroit and other de-industrializing cities take on a texture foreign to the assessments offered in treatments of feasibility studies and economic redevelopment.²²¹ Rather, these projects seem conspicuous and often serve to interrupt and undermine the values that operate at the basis of these modes of assessment. In what follows we shall examine the activism espoused by Boggs and embodied in the sustained critical projects of community organizations and artist collectives read in terms of the modes of criticism offered by Nietzsche.

2.2 Subjectivity and its Constraints

If we have any hope of distilling a form of dispositional critique from Nietzsche that suggests a form of activism, we must begin by looking for an account of an actor capable of taking up a genuinely critical stance to the systems of power that it both inhabits and instantiates. This is already a problem, since there is a great deal of ambiguity in the literature about Nietzsche regarding subjectivity and agency, so that describing a politically and culturally active subject emerging from the works developed by Nietzsche will be somewhat difficult.²²² Many of these interpretive problems regarding the works of Nietzsche

²²⁰ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 75.

²²¹ This analysis will be addressed further in the third chapter see pp. 207-220 below.

²²² Peter Poellner, for example, begins his "Nietzschean Freedom" (Peter Poellner, "Nietzschean Freedom," in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, 151-179.) by engaging this ambiguity in interpretation. He writes: "Irrespective of whether Nietzsche's own reasons for being dismissive of 'free will' ...are sound, many contemporary writers on the subject would concur with his conclusion. If we accept it, as I think we should, it follows that social practices which presuppose such conceptions of free will are rationally indefensible." (Poellner, "Nietzschean Freedom," 151.) Here, at the start of our discussion, it is sufficient to note that Nietzsche, when speaking of freedom, agency, or autonomy does not mean something unproblematic or immediately

stem from ambiguity regarding the status of the sovereign individual and the sense in which this individual, free spirit, or new category of philosopher can be considered to be free.

It is well known that Nietzsche rejects any transcendental notion of subjectivity or, for that matter, any sort of transcendental perspective whatsoever.²²³ The freedom of the 'free spirit', the sovereignty of the 'sovereign individual'²²⁴, then, must be understood as being immanent and biologically situated within a particular context. Even here we encounter problems because, for Nietzsche the subject is not a discrete single and uncomplicated entity, but rather a collection of drives and affects which, for most of those Nietzsche descriptively engages, are problematically constrained by "...morality of custom..." as a sort of "...social strait-jacket..." (GM II 2) For Nietzsche, then, it seems nearly impossible to account for an actor, let alone the political critic and activist that we are looking for, without engaging this morality of custom and the constellation of habitual culturally rooted principles that constrain the actor. We are, by this account, caught up in and constituted by a web of power and domination that acts upon the body and therefore the psyche of the actor. This should remind us of the argument presented by Foucault in *Discipline and*

straightforward. This is a sense that will be developed further below following Janaway, Leiter, and Richardson.

²²³ For instance, See TI "Reason" 6: "Concocting stories about a world 'other' than this one is utterly senseless, unless we have within us a powerful instinct to slander, belittle, cast suspicion on life: in which case we are *avenging* ourselves on life with the phantasmagoria of 'another', 'better' life."

²²⁴ The 'free spirit' and the 'sovereign individual', seem to share qualities that are valorized by Nietzsche. The freedom of the 'free-spirit' is discussed relatively to the dogmatism of the 'fettered spirit' constrained by the traditions, epistemological assumptions, and 'strong morals' instantiated by the larger culture. (See HH I 225-229) The 'sovereign individual' appears in GM II and is discussed by Nietzsche (as well as Janaway and Richardson) as exhibiting a new historically conditioned capacity to exert a sort of agency: *an entitlement to make promises*.

Punish. Foucault, near the conclusion of the first section of *Discipline and*

Punish, where he discusses torture, asserts:

The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A 'soul' inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body.²²⁵

Thus, for Foucault, to discuss the subject is already to be engaged with a genealogically rooted cultural and political criticism. It seems clear that this is also the case for Nietzsche, who similarly argues that the historical development of morality inscribes itself upon the body of subjectivity as a disfiguration. This embodied subjectivity, one constituted by the web of power that comprises our cultural and political context, outlines the most basic level of our struggle. The dispositional and genealogical mode of critique offered by Nietzsche would have us engage with these structures that comprise and constitute our subjectivity and thereby adopt an *insurgent* disposition. We must develop this *insurgent* disposition not only toward the overt institutional structures we encounter politically and socially, but must also engage the controlling psychological forces embedded by these overt structures that lurk within us.²²⁶ This self-*insurgent* disposition is precisely the means by which an activist can take hold of their affects, affects such as the immobilizing fear discussed in the first chapter, which

²²⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, (New York: Random House, 1977), 30.

²²⁶ See Z "On The Way of the Creator": "But the worst enemy you can encounter will always be you, yourself; you lie in wait for yourself in caves and woods. Lonely one, you are going the way to yourself. And your way leads past yourself and your seven devils. You will be a heretic to yourself and a witch and soothsayer and fool and doubter and unholy one and a villain. You must wish to consume yourself in your own flame: how could you wish to become new unless you had first become ashes! Lonely one, you are going the way of the creator: you would create a god for yourself out of your seven devils."

isolates these genealogically rooted dispositions that linger within as targets for genealogical critique.

The soul, for Nietzsche, insofar as it implies a form of metaphysical unity²²⁷ misrepresents, effects a levelling, and a taming of manifold and agonistic forces that constitute the act of willing. Nietzsche, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, characterizes the mythology of the soul as a form of atomism:

The first step must be to kill off that other and more ominous atomism that Christianity taught best and longest: *the atomism of the soul*. If you allow me, I would use this phrase to describe the belief that holds the soul to be something ineradicable, eternal, indivisible, a monad, an atom: science must cast out *this* belief! And confidentially, we do not need to get rid of 'the soul' itself nor do without one of our oldest, most venerable hypothesis, which the bungling naturalists tend to do, losing 'the soul' as soon as they've touched on it. But the way is clear for new and refined versions of the hypothesis about the soul; in the future, concepts such as the 'mortal soul' and the 'soul as the multiplicity of the subject' and 'the soul as the social construct of drives and emotions' will claim their rightful place in science. (BGE 12)

Although Nietzsche advocates for the maintenance and an interesting refinement of the concept 'soul', any notion of a metaphysically unified subject is treated as base superstition. Decisively, for Nietzsche, the human being as a moral animal was something that was bred, through a long process to conform to purposes of social utility and the 'herd perspective.' His proposals involving a 'mortal' soul as a 'multiplicity' or 'social construct' productively opened up new ground for philosophical, psychological, and socio-political analysis of this concept that is so trenchantly maintained by Western culture. By the genealogical analysis of the subject offered by Nietzsche, we are not metaphysically unified beings, but rather mortal and embodied beings comprised of a 'multiplicity' of 'drives and emotions' engaged with our topological and social contexts. As such, the '*atomism of the soul*' heavily critiqued by Nietzsche as

²²⁷ "...the superstition about souls, which even today has not ceased to sow mischief as the superstition about subject and ego..." (BGE "Preface")

“...the infantile high-mindedness of a beginner...” (BGE Preface) esteemed so dogmatically shows itself to be a stifling concept that reinforces a disposition of self-passivity (rather than *insurgency*) by imposing a true ‘inner’ world. Such a conception of a true ‘inner’ world, through a metaphysical sleight of hand, imposes affective presuppositions as structures of cultural and social control upon the subject as though they were self-evident expressions of our own subjectivity.²²⁸ Thus Nietzsche inverts (as does Foucault) the famous claim placed into Socrates’ mouth by Plato: ‘the soul is the prison of the body.’²²⁹

Nietzsche argues:

My idea is clearly that consciousness actually belongs not to man’s existence as an individual but rather to the community – and herd-aspects of his nature; that accordingly, it is finely developed only in relation to its usefulness to community or herd; and that consequently each of us, even with the best will in the world to understand ourselves as individually as possible, ‘to know ourselves’, will always bring to consciousness precisely that in ourselves which is ‘non-individual’, that which is average; that due to the nature of consciousness – to the ‘genius of the species’ governing it - our thoughts themselves are continually as it were outvoted and translated back into the herd perspective.(GS 354)

Accordingly, our morality, virtues, conscience, values, habits, good taste, etc.; all of these facets of our identity, when assessed genealogically show themselves to be the effects of power in the service of the interests of domination and control. Reflective consciousness, the faculty that for millennia has been considered by Western philosophy to be the seat of our distinctively human agency, shows itself to be continually ‘outvoted,’ expressing ‘the herd perspective’. This should lead

²²⁸ While my fear of Detroit seems to be mine, resting as it seems to in the pit of my stomach, really it is imparted by culture, media, and a genealogical hand-me-down from my father’s imparted fear. Unseating the notion of a true ‘inner’ world is the first step, for Nietzsche, toward asserting power over such affects rather than being passive and docile expressions of these second-hand dispositions.

²²⁹ “These lovers of learning recognize that before philosophy takes their soul in hand, it is simply bound fast within the body, and glued to it, so that it’s forced to investigate things as if through prison bars and never by itself, through its own resources; the outcome is that it rolls around in total ignorance.” (Plato, *Phaedo*, 82e)

us to a state of deep concern regarding the possibility of genuine agency that is necessary for substantive forms of activism. Indeed, most frequently, when discussing freedom or the free will, Nietzsche rejects these notions vehemently.

The following passages should illustrate this sufficiently:

From *Human, All Too Human*:

The fable of intelligible freedom - ... Now one finally discovers that this nature, too, cannot be accountable, inasmuch as it is altogether a necessary consequence and assembled from the elements and influence of things past and present: that is to say, that man can be made accountable for nothing, not for his nature, nor for his motives, nor for his actions, nor for the effects he produces. One has thereby attained to the knowledge that the history of the moral sensations is the history of an error, the error of accountability, which rests on the error of freedom of will. (HH I 39)

From *Daybreak*:

What is willing! – We laugh at him who steps out of his room at the moment when the sun steps out of its room, and then says: ‘*I will* that the sun shall rise’; and at him who cannot stop a wheel, and says: ‘*I will* that it shall roll’; and at him who is thrown down in wrestling, and says: ‘here I lie, but *I will* lie here!’ But, all laughter aside, are we ourselves ever acting any differently whenever we employ the expression: ‘*I will*’? (D 124)

From *The Gay Science*:

Aftereffects of the oldest religiosity. – Every thoughtless person believes that the will alone is effective; that willing is something simple, absolutely given, underivable, and intelligible in itself. When he does something, e.g. strikes something, he is convinced that it is he who is striking, and that he did the striking because he *wanted* to strike. He does not even notice the problem here; the feeling of *will* suffices for him to assume cause and effect, but also to believe that he *understands* their relation. He knows nothing of the mechanism of what happened and the hundredfold delicate work that has to be done to bring about the strike, or of the incapacity of the will as such to do even the slightest part of this work. The will is to him a force that works by magic: the belief in the will as the cause of effects is the belief in forces that work by magic. (GS 127)

From *Beyond Good and Evil*:

Truly, a theory is charming not least because it is refutable: that is just what attracts the better minds to it. It would seem that the theory of ‘free will’, which has been refuted a hundred times over, owes its endurance to this charm alone – someone is always coming along and feeling strong enough to refute it. (BGE 18)

From *On the Genealogy of Morals*:

Bound to do so by instinct of self-preservation and self-affirmation, an instinct which habitually sanctifies every lie, this kind of man discovered his faith in the indifferent, freely choosing ‘subject’. The subject (or, to adopt a more popular idiom, the *soul*) has, therefore, been perhaps the best article of faith on earth so far, since it enables the

majority of mortals, the weak and downtrodden of all sorts, to practice that self-deception – the interpretation of weakness itself as freedom, of the way they simply are, as *merit*. (GM I 13)

From *Twilight of the Idols*:

Error of Free Will.- We no longer have any sympathy nowadays for the concept 'free will': we know only too well what it is – the most disreputable piece of trickery the theologians have produced, aimed at making humanity 'responsible' in their sense, i.e. at *making it dependent on them*...(TI "The Four Great Errors" 7)

As we can see from the passages above, once we reject along with Nietzsche the atomism of the soul, the whole edifice of Western morality falls in one foul swoop. If, when we look inside we find only the 'herd perspective', "...man can be made accountable for nothing..." (HH I 39) since it is that perspective we express when we heed the voice from 'inside'. Further, human history cannot liberate us since, by Nietzsche's account, "...the history of the moral sensations is the history of an error..." (HH I 39) and thus holds no authority. The act of willing itself, in so far as it is attached to the synthetic concept 'I' shows itself to be laughable and "...a force that works by magic..." (GS 127) This whole edifice of the 'I' commits the cardinal Nietzschean sin insofar as it interprets "...weakness itself as freedom..." (GM I 13), or the act of obeying as commanding. Thus, insofar as responsibility depends upon the atomism of the soul as a metaphysical unity, the notion shows itself also to be counterfeit.

Nietzsche, for all of the vehement rejection of the notion of willing and the free will, (which always, everywhere, and as cited above, is linked to the metaphysical interpretations of soul, ego, and the like) does maintain notions of sovereignty, of free-spiritedness, and self-mastery. In light of Foucault who, in *Discipline and Punish*, lays out a structure of power and domination over a

completely conditioned subjectivity, it may seem nearly impossible for such sovereignty and free-spiritedness to arise. By Nietzsche's argument, reflective consciousness, along with language, the ability to value, and our very notions of self, all arise as forms of domination at the hands of the social utility of herd morality. Nietzsche, speaking decisively of a reflective and linguistic consciousness²³⁰, in *The Gay Science*, asserts:

But for entire races and lineages, this seems to me to hold: Where need and distress have for a long time forced people to communicate, to understand each other swiftly and subtly, there finally exists a surplus of this power and art of expression, a faculty, so to speak, which has slowly accumulated and now waits for an heir to spend it lavishly (the so called artists are the heirs, as well as the orators, preachers, writers – all of them people who come at the end of a long chain, each of them 'born late' in the best sense of the term, and each of them, again, *squanderers* by nature). Assuming this observation is correct, I may go on to conjecture that consciousness in general has developed only under the pressure of the need to communicate; that at the outset, consciousness was necessary, was useful, only between persons (particularly between those who commanded and those who obeyed); and that it has developed only in proportion to that usefulness. Consciousness is really just a net connecting one person with another – only in this capacity did it have to develop; the solitary and predatory person would not have needed it. (GS 354)

Thus, the reflective autonomy that much Enlightenment moral theory relies upon pertains not to an autonomous individual, but, by this characterization, it pertains rather to consciousness understood as the net that binds one person to another.

As we noted above, Nietzsche argues that "...consciousness actually belongs not to man's existence as an individual but rather to the community – and herd-aspects of his nature..." (GS 354) Effectively, when we look inside ourselves, rather than genuine reflective agency, we find that "...our thoughts themselves are continually as it were *outvoted* and translated back into the herd perspective." (GS 354)

²³⁰ "...seeing itself in the mirror..." (GS 354)

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche further problematizes the notion of agency by complicating the notion of the will establishing a tension between the affects of commanding and obeying. Here he argues that in every act of will there exists a complex nexus of sensations,²³¹ thought,²³² and emotions. At the emotional level we experience a tension that, as Nietzsche notes, we are conditioned to gloss over. Here Nietzsche first notes the emotion of command and all of the pleasurable feelings that we associate with commanding.

What is called 'freedom of the will' is essentially the emotion of superiority felt towards one who must obey: 'I am free, "he" must obey.' This consciousness lies in every will, as does also a tense alertness, a direct gaze concentrated on one thing alone, an unconditional assessment that 'now we must have this and nothing else', an inner certainty that obedience will follow, and everything else that goes along with the condition of giving commands. (BGE 19)

We essentially associate our sensation of freedom of the will with command and the pleasure that comes along with command. There exists a double problem here. First, as Nietzsche notes: "...we both command *and* obey, and when we obey we know the feelings of coercion, pressure, oppression, resistance, and agitation that begin immediately after the act of will." (BGE 19) We call the will one thing while it is actually a complex of four categories of states in tension with one another (sensations, thought, and emotions of command and obedience). As such, when we will and apprehend the act of willing as one simple and unambiguous thing we effectively disfigure and misrepresent the act to ourselves by "...ignoring or overlooking this division by means of the synthetic

²³¹ "...the feeling of the condition we are moving *away* from and the feeling of the condition we are moving *towards*; and then a concomitant feeling in the muscles that, without our actually moving 'arms and legs', comes into play out of a kind of habit..." (BGE 19)

²³² "...there is a commanding thought, and we must not deceive ourselves that this thought can be separated off from 'willing'..." (BGE 19)

concept 'I.'" (BGE 19) Nietzsche likens this to a ruling class that identifies itself with the success of the community as a whole.

The other problem, as noted by Leiter in his "Nietzsche's Theory of the Will"²³³ is a problem of order. Simply stated, when 'I' will ('I' being, as Nietzsche notes, a synthetic concept that associates itself with the pleasurable feeling of command), the 'I' that is associated with the pleasurable effects of the act of willing only emerges after the act is performed. There effectively is no 'I' that wills. In Leiter's words:

...there is no 'commandeering thought' preceding the conscious thought to which the meta-feeling (the affect of superiority) attaches. ... Since we do not *experience* our thoughts as willed the way we experience some actions as willed, it follows that no thought comes when 'I will it' because the experience to which the 'I will' attaches is absent.²³⁴

This presents us with a picture of the self, the 'I', as a mere epiphenomenon – as an aftereffect of the act of willing which, itself is the result of a confluence of forces made up of the various drives, instincts, affects or feelings. It is hard to see from this picture how anything resembling a consistent self, let alone any notion of 'self' that could become master of itself might arise. The self would appear just to be an effect; a fabrication of our instinct to prefer the pleasure and triumph of command to the coercion, pressure, and oppression of obedience. We would seem to be looking for agency with no unified agent, but only a collection of drives divided against one another.

²³³ Brian Leiter, "Nietzsche's Theory of the Will," in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, pp. 107-126.

²³⁴ Leiter, "Nietzsche's Theory of the Will," 113.

Commentators such as Janaway turn to "...positing integration of the multiple drives under one dominant drive."²³⁵ In the selection from *Beyond Good and Evil* discussed above, Nietzsche discusses the act of willing as "...based on a social structure of many 'souls'..." and discusses willing as "...the theory of hierarchical relationships among which the phenomenon 'life' has its origins." (BGE 19) We can understand each act of will as we might understand a political struggle between the drives and affects. Here we should turn back to *Daybreak* 109, where Nietzsche discusses six methods for "...combating the vehemence of a drive." Nietzsche asserts:

...that one *desires* to combat the vehemence of a drive at all, however, does not stand within our own power; nor does the choice of any particular method; nor does the success or failure of this method. What is clearly the case is that in the entire procedure our intellect is only the blind instrument of *another drive* which is a *rival* of the drive whose vehemence is tormenting us: whether it be the drive to restfulness, or the fear of disgrace and other evil consequences, or love. While 'we' believe we are complaining about the vehemence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive *which is complaining about another*; that is to say: for us to become aware that we are suffering from the *vehemence* of a drive presupposes the existence of another equally vehement or even more vehement drive, and that a *struggle* is in prospect in which our intellect is going to have to take sides. (D 109)

Nietzsche, offering this naturalized account of internal conflict situates all active forces in an agonistic struggle at the level of the drives or instincts. The only respect in which something resembling a consistent character can emerge is through the subordination of many drives under one powerful drive. The intellect, by this account, even given that Nietzsche notes it must "take sides", resides in this conflict as a mere spectator akin to an octopus wielding Detroit Red Wings fan at a home game.²³⁶ Certainly Nietzsche in many places points to instances in

²³⁵ Christopher Janaway, "Autonomy, Affect, and the Self in Nietzsche's Project of Genealogy," in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*, 58.

²³⁶ "The octopus first made its appearance on April 15, 1952, during the Red Wings' Stanley Cup playoff run.

which the drives and instincts are in anarchy as problematic. His treatment of the 'Problem of Socrates' in *Twilight of the Idols*, makes this case with regards to the anarchy of the instincts in both Socrates and, generally, the Greeks.²³⁷

Nietzsche, in this section, remains heavily critical of Socrates' claim to have become master of his bad desires and appetites, arguing that the Socratic panacea – turning the faculty of reason into a "...*counter-tyrant*..." (TI "The Problem of Socrates" 9) – is effectively another form of decadence.

Socrates was a misunderstanding; *the entire morality of improvement, Christianity's included, was a misunderstanding*... The harshest daylight, rationality at all costs, life bright, cold, cautious, conscious, instinct-free, instinct resistant: this itself was just an illness, a different illness – and definitely not a way back to 'virtue', 'health', happiness.... To *have to* fight against the instincts – this is the formula for *decadence*: so long as life is *ascendant*, happiness equals instinct. – (TI "The Problem of Socrates" 11)

The opposition of reason to the passions shows itself to be the underlying problem with morality by Nietzsche's argument. In Morality as Anti-Nature, he argues that the fundamental problem with "...almost every morality which has hitherto been taught, revered, and preached..." is not that it tries to combat the anarchy of these drives and instincts, but that it does so bluntly by turning "...against the vital instincts..." (TI "Morality as Anti-Nature" 4) as a form of castration or eradication. The dominant trend in morality engages instincts that show themselves to be generative of stupidity with a blunt crusade against the passions and instincts themselves waged by reason. The underlying problem

Two Detroit brothers, Pete and Jerry Cusimano - storeowner's in Detroit's Eastern Market - threw the eight-legged cephalopod on the ice at Olympia Stadium. Each tentacle of the octopus was symbolic of a win in the playoffs. Back then, the NHL boasted only six teams, and eight wins (two best-of-seven series) were needed to win the Stanley Cup. The Red Wings swept the series that year, and the Octopus has come to be the good luck charm ever since." Detroit Red Wings, "Red Wings NHL Club Page," Accessed June 28, 2016.

<http://redwings.nhl.com/club/page.htm?id=43781>

²³⁷ "His [Socrates] was basically only the extreme case, only the most overt example of what was at that stage starting to become a general need: the fact that no one was master of himself any more, that the instincts were turning against each other." (TI, "The Problem of Socrates" 9).

with the opposition of reason to the drives and passions it that it supposes that reason and reflective consciousness hold a position independent of these drives and passions. For Nietzsche this is not the case. There exists no unified transcendental field that would grant reason or reflective consciousness such a privileged position. Accordingly, Nietzsche laments that what he calls an intelligent war on passion was an impossibility given "...the soil from which Christianity grew up..." (TI "Morality as Anti-Nature" 1) Instead Nietzsche advocates what he calls the "...*spiritualization of the passions*." (TI "Morality as Anti-Nature" 1) Nietzsche, using the example of the spiritualization of *enmity*, a passion that we would instinctively oppose, illustrates the value of having enemies.

This consists in our profound understanding of the value of having enemies: in short, our doing and deciding the converse of what people previously thought and decided. Throughout the ages the church has wanted to destroy its enemies: we, we immoralists and anti-Christians, see it as to our advantage that the church exists...(TI "Morality as Anti-Nature" 3)

Nietzsche interestingly oscillates, as he frequently does, between culture (the church), politics, and the individual human being, discussing disposition to enmity with regard to a fruitful conflict with our 'internal enemy'. "One is *fruitful* only at the price of being rich in opposites; one stays *young* only on condition that the soul does not have a stretch and desire peace..." (TI "Morality as Anti-Nature" 3) Healthy morality as opposed to anti-natural morality, (insofar as we can read this as a prescription to orient and spiritualize our passions and drives) would involve the fostering of dominant drives in orientation to the vicissitudes of life rather than merely bluntly opposing drives deemed to be problematic with reason.

Thus, for Nietzsche, human beings (like all animals) are collections of instincts, drives, passions, etc. While we have come to see ourselves as a unified transcendental field, we merely congratulate ourselves for acting on our most powerful drives, ones that have a social utility reinforced by language and the power systems of morality that act to cull our drives and encourage them to act against one another. Freedom for Nietzsche, at least by this account, is to marshal our drives under the power of a single dominant drive to create a political unity under which we can be said to have a consistent character. The act of willing is something complicated, rather than something simple, in the absence of a metaphysically substantial synthetic 'I'. The supposedly 'simple' notion that we call 'will' arises as a complex process resulting from a struggle amongst these drives. There is no 'ego' or 'soul' that stands apart from these drives, so the only way to reign in or direct a drive is by means of another drive. The goal would be to orient these drives and instincts so that they no longer represent anarchy or decadence, under the authority of a master drive, so that they no longer problematically conflict.

This characterization of the Nietzschean self always seems too simple, as having what Richardson calls "...almost chemical simplicity."²³⁸ Richardson, offering a clear and compelling case for multiple historically layered capacities that together comprise what he calls Nietzsche's "...own prospective idea of what freedom can become"²³⁹, characterizes Nietzsche's account by juxtaposing the

²³⁸ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 132.

²³⁹ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 146.

animalistic level of freedom with the unity imposed by subordinating the instincts and drives under a dominant drive. Of the animalistic level, Richardson asserts:

Here Nietzsche thinks of freedom as a capacity that reaches down into our animality, into our condition simply as (an instance of) 'life'. I think he would be willing to attribute this first kind of freedom to organisms generally, though of course he is always focused on the human case. For each living thing is a collection of drives, drives that compete to control what the organism does.²⁴⁰

This first layer of Nietzsche's account of freedom Richardson characterizes as 'drive freedom.' The drives express themselves in a manner that controls the organism, but still lacking a sense of unity. Again, Richardson explains:

I suggest that we picture the drives as a set of forces of various strengths, pushing for our various goals. By the relation between their goals, they tend to further or hinder one another. And by the relation between their strengths, they tend either to command or obey one another. So, we may say, by their vectors and strengths, they stand at any moment in a certain 'power structure' with one another, a system of oppositions and alliances, forcings and compulsions. But further, we must imagine this structure as fluctuating rather drastically through time, as particular drives strengthen (perhaps stimulated by the situation) or weaken (perhaps when sated). Now what will unification be?²⁴¹

Richardson answers this question by layering two manners of unification. The first layer that Richardson discusses above estimates the unification in terms of functionality and effectiveness of the organism acting in the world. The second involves a stable power structure or "...a persisting network of power-relations to one another."²⁴² Here Richardson argues that the drives and instincts should be held in place within a structure so that some drives do not conflict, anarchically overpowering others, but rather, that the organism "...keeps a consistent view of its interest, and runs its behavior with a steady aim."²⁴³

There are at least two problems with this account. The first, as Richardson notes, involves the absence of a role for the conscious deliberating

²⁴⁰ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 132.

²⁴¹ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 133-134.

²⁴² Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 135.

²⁴³ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 135.

self. “Either there is no such thing, or it is an epiphenomenon (an aftereffect that affects nothing else), or it is simply a secondary tool or expression of the drives.”²⁴⁴ Under the same umbrella go our conscious values and articulated principles. Second, and seemingly more problematic, is that the effectiveness and persistence of this organism would seem to prescribe something that resembles the heavily criticized figure of “good and strong character” from *Human, All Too Human*.

The Good, strong character – Narrowness of views, through habit become instinct, conducts to what is called strength of character. When someone acts from a few but always the same motives, his actions attain a great degree of energy; if those actions are in accord with the principles held by the fettered spirits they receive recognition and produce in him who does them the sensation of good conscience. Few motives, energetic action and good conscience constitute what is called strength of character. (HH I 228)

This would hardly appear to be a description of a spirit who has become free, but rather characterizes a ‘fettered spirit’ – a spirit dominated at the affective level by the constraints and prohibitions of their cultural context. Ascribing this notion of a persistent character to the position argued by Nietzsche seems to impose a normative structure that would calcify the drives of the human being in a way that could bring about dogmatism and stubbornness. The problem Richardson is addressing by ascribing this position to Nietzsche is that the drives can be seen to be “...fluctuating rather drastically through time, as particular drives strengthen (perhaps stimulated by the situation) or weaken (perhaps when sated).”²⁴⁵ This solution to the problem of drastic fluctuation of the power structure at work between the drives is at odds with the critical project of Nietzsche. The spirit we are looking for, if we are going to rely upon Nietzsche to inform the practice of

²⁴⁴ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 136.

²⁴⁵ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 133-134.

activism “...is the exception, the fettered spirits are the rule...” (HH I 225) This subject should minimally have the capacity to rebel against this normative structure that would calcify the drives – the capacity for *insurgency*.

The key merit of the proposal offered by Richardson is that it layers three principal phases or stages that accumulate to the full conception of freedom venerated by Nietzsche. The unifying of the drives is only the first layer. In addition to this first-layer account, Richardson offers a second layer with a treatment of the deliberative self, and a third with what he calls ‘self-genealogy’. By discussing the historical development of these three principal phases of freedom that layer upon one another, Richardson is able to account for, in Nietzschean terms, a robust set of capacities capable of meeting the challenges occasioned by fear generated by our sense of a heavily represented city like Detroit discussed in the first chapter.

We have already engaged with the arising of the deliberative self with our discussion of communication, so that a very short summary of the argument provided by Richardson here will suffice. Nietzsche treats deliberation or reflective consciousness as something that arose through the need for communication as a means to make the organism socially useful. Richardson, noting this, argues that the deliberative self as a “...capacity must include a strong *inhibitive* power, to refrain from acting immediately upon one’s drives.”²⁴⁶ The deliberative self can be understood to be a “...dispositional capacity...” and should not be read to be a distinct perspective from the drives, but rather “...as it

²⁴⁶ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 139.

were 'in the trenches' with the drives, not something different in kind."²⁴⁷ By socializing ourselves in terms of the development of this inhibitive capacity, we are able to develop conscious rules and to remember and enact these rules.

Richardson notes:

...the rules are applied in consciousness – they are made so as to work explicitly, by contrast with the purposes in the drives. (It is by having these conscious rules that the organism has 'values' in our usual sense – though Nietzsche uses the term more liberally, insisting that we, and other animals, already value in [sic] the unconscious drives.) As some drive inclines me towards an inviting act, memory must jolt me into awareness of the rule that prohibits it.²⁴⁸

Whatever may be said of the herd-morality that offers the content of the inhibitions of this inhibiting drive, it must still be recognized as a new sort of "...dispositional ability..." and it must be taken "...alongside the other abilities that are its drives."²⁴⁹ While 'reflective consciousness' or the 'deliberative self' expresses a form of double bad conscience or self-deception (it thinks itself to be free to restrain the drives, and also able to will in complete independence from them), it is quite often actually able to control the organism and its other drives. The agency associated with the deliberative self, while a power and form of agency, represents the moment when I (my drives) are most constrained by the morality of the herd. Richardson, following Nietzsche, asserts:

...agency expresses not my individual interest, but social and generic ones. So all its I-ing is a kind of sham, implanted in the interests of taming and herding me. In this respect my drives are the more 'me' than my conscious thinking and choosing. But agency has been designed as an enemy of these drives: it is pitted against the aggressive drives in particular, i.e., precisely those in which people once most enjoyed the 'affect of command', in which they felt themselves most masterly and free. So this agential freedom has been achieved only by a sacrifice of the original freedom in our drives. And to become an individual, *the* individual it is possible for me to be, I must let these drives give me content. I must align my agency with a unity that is achieved in my drives.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 137.

²⁴⁸ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 140.

²⁴⁹ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 140.

²⁵⁰ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 143.

It is by synthesizing drive-freedom with reflective agency that Richardson points the way forward. He argues that Nietzsche sees, with the decline of morality, the grip of agency upon the drives weakening, or as Richardson notes: “People feel less and less reason to use their agency against their drives, or indeed to any end at all.”²⁵¹ As we feel less of a need to oppose agency to the drives it becomes possible to experience these two freedoms as a unity or double-freedom, although problematically the relative power of both the drives and of agency has also become severely weakened. The trick here is to exercise agency in the service of the drive power structure (rather than in the service of herd morality in bad conscience). Richardson correctly argues that this double sense of freedom, while complicated, is still incomplete.

Richardson turns finally to a treatment of what he regards as Nietzsche’s “...own prospective idea of what freedom can become.”²⁵² Self-genealogy, according to Richardson, adds a new kind of agency, “...agency to at last understand itself – and to redesign itself accordingly [that] gives us a new way to become a self, a self that feels a new power, and assumes a new responsibility.”²⁵³ This new sort of agency would allow us to delve into a self-critical evaluation of the pre-history of the interests and power relations that make up what we have been calling ‘soul’ in both the Foucauldian and Nietzschean sort. Richardson asserts:

The secret rule of those social interests has opposed what is in fact the basic and indispensable part of the organism, its drives. It’s only genealogy that brings these alien interests to light, and gives the agent a chance to oppose and correct them, as they work in itself. Thus genealogy gives us a new way to be ‘free from’ control by external wills. It

²⁵¹ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 145.

²⁵² Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 146.

²⁵³ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 146.

is a way for the organism to take fuller control over itself, as well as a kind of control over those foreign interests it culls out of itself.²⁵⁴

Thus, for Richardson, self-genealogy gives us the perspective and insight for self-criticism (a sort of *insurgency* directed toward the structures comprising the self or self-*insurgency*) and the effective re-orientation of our drives and affects, while at the same time the means to take possession of ourselves. As Nietzsche notes in *The Gay Science*:

Your judgment, 'that is right' has a prehistory in your drives, inclinations, aversions, experiences, and what you have failed to experience; you have to ask, 'how did it emerge there?' and then also, 'what is really impelling me to listen to it?' You can listen to its commands like a good soldier who heeds the command of his officer. Or like a woman who loves the one who commands. Or like a flatterer and coward who fears the commander. Or like a fool who obeys because he can think of no objection. In short, there are a hundred ways to listen to your conscience. But *that* you hear this or that judgment as the words of conscience, i.e., *that* you feel something to be right may have its cause in your never having thought much about yourself and in your blindly having accepted what has been labelled *right* since your childhood; or in the fact that fulfilling your duties has so far brought you bread and honours – and you consider it right because it appears to you as *your own* 'condition of existence'... (GS 335)

Self-understanding and self-mastery would require us to understand that the voice of our own conscience is not our own and that our drives and affects are conditioned by systems of reward and punishment. The trick is to expose what the agency of the deliberative self is doing to the drives, where it disfigures them (through fear, for example). Only through recognizing this heredity of power and domination through self-genealogy, argues Richardson, can we turn agency back on itself "...so as to understand these values, and the interests they secretly express."²⁵⁵

Richardson's account of freedom in Nietzsche supplies us with a psychological framework to understand how we might cultivate our drives and

²⁵⁴ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 146.

²⁵⁵ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 148.

affects in a way that can overcome the fear generated by the myth of a place like Detroit. While, admittedly, the immediate experience of burned out and blighted neighbourhoods in the context of an unmaintained and sparsely inhabited urban landscape may not be reassuring to middle class academic sensibilities, as was argued throughout the preceding chapter, the fear generated by the myth of a place like Detroit has a history that should be critically engaged and, insofar as it stifles engagement, overcome. By the schema offered by Richardson, this fear instilled by myth rests in reflective consciousness' mutilation of the drives and is heightened by both contributions to the *archive* pertaining to Detroit (news reports, scholarly publications, etc.) as well as culturally maintained and replicated sensibilities (i.e., stories passed on from parents to children and related by idle chatter). Self-genealogy, as a third layer of freedom, offers a perspective from which to engage these 'alien interests' and bring them to light. Nietzsche uses the metaphor of a gardener to illustrate:

What we are at liberty to do. – One can dispose of one's drives like a gardener and, though few know it, cultivate the shoots of anger, pity, curiosity, vanity as productively and profitably as a beautiful fruit tree on a trellis; one can do it with the good or bad taste of a gardener... one can also let nature rule and only attend to a little embellishment and tidying-up here and there; one can, finally, without paying any attention to them at all, let the plants grow up and fight their fight out among themselves – indeed, one can take delight in such a wilderness, and desire precisely this delight, though it gives one some trouble, too. All this we are at liberty to do: but how many know we are at liberty to do it? Do the majority not *believe* in *themselves* as complete and *fully-developed facts*? (D 560)

Self-genealogy reveals the root structure of reflective consciousness' mutilation of the drives. Richardson's argument relies on the standpoint of the drives as one separate from and more reliable than the agency of reflective consciousness. The normative point is not, however, simply to stir up and set loose my drives and appetites, though this is a possibility as noted by Nietzsche

in the passage above (though, one attended with ‘some trouble’). Nietzsche is elsewhere (in his more prescriptive moments) critical of what he calls ‘*laisser-aller*’, letting go.”²⁵⁶ To illustrate, Richardson draws our attention to two passages. First, from *Twilight of the Idols*:

‘Freedom as I do not mean it...’ – In times like the present, being left to one’s instincts is just one more disastrous stroke of fate. These instincts contradict, impede, and destroy one another; I have already defined *modern* as physiological self-contradiction. Rationality in education would want at least one of these instinct systems to be put under intense pressure and *paralysed* so to allow another to fortify itself, to become strong, to dominate.’ (TI “Skirmishes” 41)

Richardson directs us to his second example in *Beyond Good and Evil*, where Nietzsche criticizes the anarchist ‘*laisser-aller*’ in its opposition to the tyranny of despotic laws. Nietzsche, speaking of the creativity of artistic inspiration, notes:

“...Every artist knows how far from feeling of anything-goes his ‘most natural’ condition is, the free ordering, arranging, deciding, shaping that occurs in his moments of ‘inspiration’ – and how delicately and strictly, especially at such moments, he obeys the thousandfold laws whose very exactness and rigour make a mockery of all conceptual formulations (even the most solid concept, by comparison, has something muzzy, multifarious, ambiguous-). To repeat, it seems that the essential thing, both ‘in heaven and on earth’, is that there be a protracted period of unidirectional obedience: in the long run, that is how something emerged and emerges that makes life on earth worth living: virtue, for example, or art, music, dance, reason, spirituality – something transfiguring, elegant, wild, and divine. The long constraint of spirit; the reluctant coercion in the communicability of thoughts; the thinker’s self-imposed discipline to think within guidelines set up by court or Church, or according to Aristotelian assumptions... all this violence, arbitrariness, harshness, horror, nonsense has turned out to be the means by which the European spirit was bred to be strong, ruthlessly curious, and beautifully nimble. (BGE 188)

In both passages above we can observe the importance of some sort of ordering structure inhibiting the drives. The difference is that, according to Richardson, this rule structure (as a result of the critical perspective opened up by self-genealogy) will be a rule structure that we have fashioned for ourselves.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms”, 149.

²⁵⁷ It is important that, though this may sound like the Kantian account of autonomy, there exists absolutely no standpoint like the transcendental reason employed in this ethical system. This is not the conception of a reason separate and independent of all experience, but the agency of a ‘deliberative self’ understood (as we saw above) as one ‘in the trenches’ with the drives. For

Accordingly, Richardson notes: “Agency will still constrain drives, but now in their own interest: its roles are to discipline them, and to foster the emergence of a unifying passion.”²⁵⁸

The three layers of historically conditioned freedom work together to establish what might be considered to be an internal tension. First, the animalistic layer of freedom would foster the emergence of a dominant passion or drive thus establishing a hierarchy of drives. Atop this we find the layer of agency which, though self-misunderstanding itself to be self-generative and the locus of actions and deeds, is actually a powerful inhibitive power, though a power in the service to “...usefulness to community or herd....” (GS 354) Finally, the layer of self-genealogy effectively inhibits the disfiguring effects of this inhibiting rational agency directing it to fashion rule structures that stand apart from the community or herd. Self-genealogy turns agency back upon itself in order to unmask the heredity of power and domination constitutive of agency.

Richardson concludes as follows:

Most broadly, freedom is something historical: an ability – with a linked idea of itself – that has been built very gradually through human history, and in such a way that earlier stages are layered beneath more recent ones. To say what freedom ‘is’ we must tell this history, and also show how this history is now embodied in us, in a layered capacity that works in our drives, in our agency, and now also in our genealogical insight into that agency. Nietzsche argues that with this last step freedom really accomplishes much of what it has claimed to do in agential freedom – it makes one sovereign, and an individual, in senses not yet really true so long as our agency failed to diagnose how its own taming and moralizing design made it work in the interests of foreign forces. Only genealogy lets us understand the design of values and powers we have taken for granted, opening the way to the new and more adequate freedom Nietzsche commends to us.²⁵⁹

Nietzsche, this is not reason’s mastery of the passions expressing itself as a rational autonomy that overrides the passions altogether, but rather an experimental ordering of the drives in such a manner as to allow them to express themselves healthily while maintaining the agonistic tensions that account for their potency.

²⁵⁸ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 148.

²⁵⁹ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 149.

For Richardson the freedom of the Nietzschean free-spirit has its ultimate expression in a reflective consciousness that is turned back on itself. Self-genealogy, working alongside the ability to inhibit the drives is able to unify the drives sufficiently for these drives to express themselves as a self-organized and unified consistent (or persistent) character. In this manner Richardson is able to project an enduring notion of the self upon Nietzsche that, granted, would account for a new sort of responsibility – that is, for a being “...who is really *entitled* to make promises...”(GM 41) Problematically, all three layers of this movement are far too interior for Nietzsche’s introduction of the free spirit and new category of philosopher in *Beyond Good and Evil*. By the reading of Nietzsche advanced by Richardson, self-genealogy amounts to a meta-reflective ability acting upon a reflective ability that acts upon the drives.

There are (again) at least two problems with the account of ‘properly Nietzschean freedom’ offered by Richardson. Firstly, the normative push toward the unification of the drives under a single and persistently dominant drive (and it is a normative push) would produce a persistent character that far too closely resembles the ‘good and strong character’ criticized in *Human, All Too Human* (as noted above). This move, also present in the interpretation offered by Janaway, aims at producing “...a unified, self-conscious, autonomous subject...”²⁶⁰, or “...the conception of oneself as deciding, choosing, and trying as a genuine agent.”²⁶¹ Further, as we have already seen from Richardson’s self-genealogically regulated reflective agency, also present in Janaway we find a

²⁶⁰ Janaway, “Autonomy, Affect, and the Self,” 58.

²⁶¹ Janaway, “Autonomy, Affect, and the Self,” 66.

push toward an "...enquirer... an active and sufficiently unified self... that rides on top of the inner multiplicity, and that can self-consciously adopt attitudes towards it."²⁶²

The second limitation of the picture of Nietzschean freedom drawn by Richardson is its emphasis upon interiority rather than treating one's drives as effective (or potentially and problematically ineffective) means to engage with the world. This account lacks the sort of reciprocity between overcoming self-contradiction and engagement with life that are essential to the tension drawn by Nietzsche. By emphasizing only overcoming self-contradiction, Richardson has effectively mirrored Foucault's use of genealogy in *Discipline and Punish*, by only unmasking the discrete mechanisms of power and domination that act upon the body of the subject, without accounting for any perspective that would provide us with any critical leverage upon these mechanisms. Since these mechanisms of power and domination are not exclusively internal, but rather are constituted by systems of politics, economy, and culture that we embody and inhabit, proper *insurgency* must account for active, embodied, and worldly engagement with these systems.²⁶³ Action in the world is only a secondary feature of Richardson's account. Neither the deliberative self nor the genealogical self-criticism helps us here, since both are essentially inhibiting forces. The deliberative self (or

²⁶² Janaway, "Autonomy, Affect, and the Self," 60.

²⁶³ To illustrate, I did not fully understand the challenges and emotional turmoil associated with food insecurity in Detroit until I had to engage with sustenance activities in Detroit on my limited graduate student summer budget. Even still, I was engaging with the city from a position of privilege. I had access to a car. My residence in Detroit was only temporary. Etc. Nonetheless problems and unforeseen circumstances did arise forcing me to adapt, adopt unexpected dispositions, and more generally overcome my own affective limitations during my stay. It is far more consistent to interpret Nietzsche's prescriptions for a robust notion of freedom as reliant upon experimentation and active engagement with context. rather than employing a reflective and meta-reflective faculty.

reflective agency) is bluntly inhibitive since it is merely the expression of the herd morality's normative prescriptions reinforced by normative sanctions.

Richardson's introduction of self-genealogy, while it represents a subtle act of interpretive advancement, is merely critical in its own right. The job of self-genealogy is to turn reflective consciousness back upon itself in order to reveal (read as inhibit) the manners in which reflective consciousness disfigures the drives through its conformity to the prescriptions of the morality of custom. Self-genealogy inhibits the inhibiting force. Nothing in Richardson reaches outside of the self in order to account for the creative energies necessary to bring about new values. Perhaps these resources can de-value values that are life negating, although they cannot account for any move that does not rest in mere criticism. Since Nietzsche insists throughout his corpus that we must be affirmers and not merely critics the merely critical account which de-values life negating values cannot be considered sufficient.

It is not the establishing of a hierarchy of drives that is problematic in this position, but rather the supposed necessary persistence of such a hierarchy. This is an interpretation that requires significant push-back against the position argued by Nietzsche and one that resists the self-critical and adaptive subjectivity presupposed by self-overcoming. Effectively, Richardson and Janaway, in their attempt to interpret a substantial and persistent notion of subjectivity out of Nietzsche have built a structure that resists one of the most dominant themes within Nietzsche's works: that of self-overcoming.

Both Richardson and Janaway offer this interpretation in order to account for the description of the sovereign individual who is "...entitled to make promises..." (GM II 2) offered in the second essay of *Genealogy of Morals*. We should pause to examine the passage further:

...the *sovereign individual*, the individual who resembles no one but himself, who has once again broken away from the morality of custom, the autonomous supra-moral individual... - in short, the man with his own independent, enduring will, the man who is *entitled to make promises*. And in him we find a proud consciousness, tense in every muscle, of *what* has finally been achieved here, of what has become incarnate in him – a special consciousness of power and freedom, a feeling of the ultimate completion of man. This liberated man, who is really *entitled* to make promises, this master of *free* will, this sovereign – how should he not be aware of his superiority over everything which cannot promise and vouch for itself? How should he not be aware of how much trust, how much fear, how much respect he arouses – he '*deserves*' all three – and how much mastery over circumstances, over nature, and over all less reliable creatures with less enduring wills is necessarily given into his hands along with this self-mastery? The 'free' man – the owner of an enduring, indestructible will – possesses also in this property his *measure of value*: looking out at others from his own vantage-point, he bestows respect or contempt. Necessarily, he respects those who are like him – the strong and reliable (those who are *entitled* to make promises), that is, anyone who promises like a sovereign – seriously, seldom, slowly – who is sparing with his trust, who *confers distinction* when he trusts, who gives his word as something which can be relied on, because he knows himself strong enough to uphold it even against accidents, even 'against fate'. ... The proud knowledge of this extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate has sunk down into his innermost depths and has become an instinct, a dominant instinct – what will he call it, this dominant instinct, assuming that he needs a name for it? About that there can be no doubt: this sovereign man calls it his *conscience*... (GM II 2)

There is some ambiguity regarding the status of the sovereign individual in the interpretative community. Richardson and Janaway hold the position that Nietzsche is using this description as a sort of exemplar, while Swanton argues "The sovereign individual is the 'ripest fruit' certainly, but the ripest fruit of a sick moral system."²⁶⁴ This argument seems to have some weight behind it, if only for the reason that that this exemplar appears at the beginning of a genealogy of bad conscience in GM II, a genealogy that involves the "branding" of this capacity for memory through pain. Nietzsche asserts of this process (a process required

²⁶⁴ Swanton, "Nietzsche and the 'Collective Individual'," in *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 188.

for the development of the capacity necessary to make a promise) “The most horrifying sacrifices and offerings,... ..the most repulsive mutilations,... the cruellest rituals of all religious cults,... - all of these things originate from that instinct which guessed that the most powerful aid to memory was pain.” (GM II 3) Moreover, at the end of the second essay, when asking about the potential of a reversal of bad conscience, Nietzsche explicitly asks “...but who is strong enough to undertake it?” (GM II 24) One would think that Nietzsche had already answered this question at the start *if* he is truly holding up the sovereign individual as an exemplar. However, Nietzsche does make it a point to assert:

So one should take care not to think any the worse of this entire phenomenon because it is from the outset ugly and painful. It is basically the same active force as is more impressively at work in the artists of force and organizers who build states. But here, on the inside, on a smaller meaner scale, in the reverse direction, in the ‘labyrinth of the breast’, to use Goethe’s words, it creates for itself a bad conscience and builds negative ideals. It is that very same *instinct of freedom* (in my terminology: the will to power): except that the material on which the form-creating and violating nature of this force vents itself is in this case man himself, the whole of his old animal self – and *not*, as is the case with that greater and more conspicuous phenomenon, the *other* man, *other* men. (GM II 18.)

Perhaps this capacity to make and keep promises grew out of bad conscience, although the origin of a thing does not account for its meaning. In this case, I would argue that the origin of this new capacity, while we would admit along with Nietzsche that its origins stem from a mutilation, is in the end a new capacity. The text would seem to support Richardson, Janaway, and my own reading of the sovereign individual as something held up as an exemplar.

It bears repeating that this instinct at work in the sovereign individual that Nietzsche *appears* to hold up as an exemplar, which brings about entitlement to make promises, is “...a dominant instinct...” (GM II 2) and not *the* dominant instinct. It is not necessary that a particular hierarchy of drives under a single

dominant drive persist, but only that there exists a structure of drives in order to ensure that the drives do not fall into anarchy and blunt opposition to one another in a manner that would disfigure the drives themselves. It is easy to think of this in terms of stages in our lives when, either for the sake of a project, to develop a capacity, or to weather a state of crisis, it is necessary for one drive to take command provisionally. In such a case, this specific hierarchy of drives would persist as long as needed and then give way to the next necessary or expedient drive structure. In this manner we could expect the sovereign individual who exercises this form of self-command to wield drives effectively given the dictates and demands of context. It would be simple to read this necessary dominant instinct for the right to make promises to be a powerful and dependable aspect of the human being within the power structure of drives, albeit one's conscience need not be *the* dominant drive. Conscience, it would seem, needs only to be powerful enough a drive to assert itself despite accidents, and 'against fate.'

There are many valorizations²⁶⁵ within Nietzsche's corpus of the malleability of character. Book four of the *Gay Science*, in section 307 ('In Favour of Criticism'); Nietzsche discusses the casting off of errors. This is apparently a victory of one's reason over error and deception, though (consistently) Nietzsche argues that these 'errors' were perhaps necessary for the furtherance of a previous stage of life. The overcoming of these 'errors' which we previously called 'truths,' are characterized by Nietzsche in terms of overcoming a need within such a particular stage. Accordingly, Nietzsche states:

²⁶⁵ See, for example, HH I 41, D 109, Z "On The Way of the Creator", GS 167, BGE 31, etc.

When we criticize, we are not doing something arbitrary and impersonal; it is, at least very often, proof that there are living, active forces within us shedding skin. We negate and have to negate because something in us *wants* to live and affirm itself, something we might not yet know or see! – Thus in favour of criticism. (GS 307)

For Nietzsche, negation and affirmation are part of the same moment. Here we see that Nietzsche's Yes-saying disposition and affirmation are the bases upon which he is able to substantively formulate his criticisms, and not at all a hindrance to critical activity. Likewise, this is why Nietzsche advocates (in line with his treatment of character in *Human, All Too Human*) adopting habits briefly. He states:

I love brief habits and consider them invaluable means for getting to know *many* things and states down to the bottom of their sweetness and bitterness; my nature is designed entirely for brief habits, even in the needs of its physical health and generally *as far as* I can see at all, from the lowest to the highest. (GS 295)

Habit and character, much like our necessary errors, are moments in our ever adapting and evolving disposition to life that should not be treated as particularly enduring. It is precisely the overcoming of these moments which constitutes the concrete expression of the love of one's fate – that is, this 'shedding skin' (GS 307) through negation is itself an affirmation of life and a form of Yes-saying. Nietzsche seeks a structure that is capable of accepting change and allowing for both action and self-overcoming. What is vital in the account of character offered by Nietzsche is the adaptive production of an individuated moral code²⁶⁶ in substitution for the bad conscience of the morality of custom.

In sum, for Nietzsche, while the sovereign individuals possess an "...enduring will..." they need not possess what might be considered a calcified

²⁶⁶"The 'free' man... possesses also in this property his *measure of value*: looking out at others from his own vantage-point, he bestows respect or contempt." (GM II 2)

character. These individuals (as Richardson notes) have a drive structure that must be seen "...as fluctuating rather drastically through time, as particular drives strengthen (perhaps stimulated by the situation) or weaken (perhaps when sated)."²⁶⁷ To account for autonomy, one need not impose a character that is resistant to change, but merely a drive that endures and asserts itself sufficiently to stand by its promises – that is, what Swanton calls a "mature cultivation of 'the personal in us' as against an 'immature, undeveloped, crude' focus on the personal."²⁶⁸ It is much more consistent to ascribe an effective and engaged account of subjectivity that rises to the challenges of life in context than it is to forcefully insert a calcified, consistent, and enduring character that stubbornly retains the qualities it has despite the demands of life and context.

2.3 Memory, History and Promising

Being entitled to make promises also depends upon memory and a notion of history sufficient to account for such promises. As we noted above this is the genealogical heritage of a process of branding and mutilation of the individual. Nietzsche notes, however, that this "...*right to affirm oneself*..." in this context is "...a ripe fruit, but also a late fruit..." that has long been "...sharp and bitter on the tree." (GM II 3) Nietzsche, in his *Untimely Meditations*, in his 'Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,' hypothesizes

...there is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of the historical sense, which is harmful and ultimately fatal to the living thing, whether this living thing be a man or a people or a culture. (UM II 1)

²⁶⁷ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 133-134.

²⁶⁸ Christine Swanton, "Nietzsche and the 'Collective Individual'," 179.

This extent (as noted in the first chapter) is relative to the "...*plastic power* of a man, a people, a culture..." (UM II 1) While the *Untimely Meditations* may be an early work, Nietzsche echoes the structure of this argument in *Beyond Good and Evil*, where he states, with regard to 'the fundamental will of the spirit':

The spirit's energy in appropriating what is foreign to it is revealed by its strong tendency to make the new resemble the old, to simplify multiplicity, to overlook or reject whatever is completely contradictory; the spirit likewise arbitrarily underlines, emphasizes, or distorts certain qualities and contours in everything that is foreign to it or of the 'outer world'. Its intention in doing so is to incorporate new 'experiences', to fit new things into old orders – to grow, then; and more specifically, to *feel* growth, to feel an increase in strength. The same will is served by an apparently opposite instinct of the spirit: a sudden decision for ignorance, for arbitrary conclusions, a closing of the shutters, inwardly saying No to this thing or that, a refusal to let things draw near, a kind of defensive posture against much potential knowledge, being content with darkness, with a limited horizon, saying Yes to ignorance and affirming it'; all this activity is necessary according to the degree of the spirit's appropriating energy, its digestive energy, to keep the same metaphor – and indeed the 'spirit' really resembles nothing so much as a stomach. (BGE 230)

The notion of history and memory that underlies one's right to make promises, therefore, is subject to the consistent principle used for evaluation throughout Nietzsche's corpus: the affirmation of life. This meta-critical aspect of his position will demand differing prescriptions depending on the situation, and not something such as a stubborn and calcified character. We shall turn next to the *Untimely Meditations*, specifically his "Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in order to extract a sense of Nietzsche's treatment of context and the status of both error and truth. Nietzsche begins with a treatment of the historical sense of animals with regard to happiness. He states:

Consider the cattle, grazing as they pass you by: they do not know what is meant by yesterday or today, they leap about, eat, rest, digest, leap about again, and so from morn till night and from day to day, fettered to the moment and its pleasure or displeasure, and thus neither melancholy or bored. This is a hard sight for man to see; for, though he thinks himself better than the animals because he is human, he cannot help envying them their happiness – what they have, a life neither bored nor painful, is precisely what he wants, yet he cannot have it because he refuses to be like an animal. A human being may well ask an animal: 'Why do you not speak to me of your happiness but only stand and gaze at me?' The animal would like to answer, and say: 'The reason is I always forget what I was

going to say' – but then he forgot this answer too, and stayed silent: so that the human being was left wondering. (UM II 1)

As suggested by this passage, historical sense can be hostile to the happiness of human beings. Interestingly, Nietzsche argues that to live a-historically is inappropriate for the human being. As Berkowitz notes:

History in its primary sense, for Nietzsche, refers to an essential feature of the human condition. Whereas animals live unhistorically, wholly absorbed in the moment, human beings live historically, in the painful and dizzying awareness not only that the past is always receding and fading from sight, but that happiness is fleeting and the future uncertain.²⁶⁹

As treated in *The Genealogy of Morals*, memory is something conditioned and branded into the human being through a process of mutilation of the drives. Given this early treatment of history in *Untimely Meditations* coupled with its echoed schema in *Beyond Good and Evil*, it seems fairly unambiguous that Nietzsche holds historical sense to be a properly human capacity. One of the main aims of this section of the *Untimely Meditations* is to determine the extent to which the human being can benefit from historical sense, since an excess of history tends to stifle life and breed hostility towards it. To this end, Nietzsche distinguishes between three potential relationships to history: the ahistorical life of animals, the suprahistorical perspective, and the historical human being. While the happiness of the ahistorical life of the animal is characterized by ignorance and forgetting, suprahistorical perspective claims to understand "...the essential condition of all happenings..." (UM II 1); essentially that the past and the present are one and the same. Recall, we noted an example of this disposition with the cyclical account of booms and busts that rests in the cultural understanding of the

²⁶⁹ Peter Berkowitz, "Nietzsche's Ethics of History," *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Winter, 1994), 12-13.

economic fates of Windsor and Detroit. The suprahistorical could plausibly be characterized as a transcendence of historical forces, since Nietzsche notes that this perspective holds that "...the world is complete and reaches finality at each and every moment." (UM II 1) The suprahistorical transcends history by establishing eternal moral and political principles. While the suprahistorical perspective serves to overcome much of the suffering implicit to a relationship with history by focusing on the eternal, Nietzsche speculates that this may be an act of resignation rather than the adoption of a relationship to history for the sake of happiness. In either case, Berkowitz notes: "...a key feature of Nietzsche's achievement was his frank and decisive renunciation of suprahistorical moral and political standards."²⁷⁰ When this notion of history was addressed in the introduction, it was criticized as one that brings about passivity, depicting the fates of Windsor and Detroit as being constituted by forces that must merely be surrendered to and endured. Leaving the suprahistorical human beings to "...their nausea and their wisdom..." (UM II 1) Nietzsche engages with the main questions of this work: how and to what extent can a relationship to history be beneficial or serve life?

Nietzsche argues that the extent to which history can be appropriated in a healthy manner by a human being depends on the *plastic power* of said human, subsequently portrayed as something akin to digestive energy in *Beyond Good and Evil*. He states:

To determine this degree, and there with the boundary at which the past has to be forgotten if it is not to become a gravedigger of the present, one would have to know exactly how great the *plastic power* of a man, a people, a culture is: I mean by plastic

²⁷⁰ Berkowitz, "Nietzsche's Ethics of History," 6.

power the capacity to develop out of oneself in one's own way, to transform and incorporate into oneself what is past and foreign, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recreate broken moulds. (UM II 1)

Plastic power, then, determines the extent to which the human being can appropriate history in a healthy life-affirming manner. This power determines the extent to which the human being can 'take' this historical sensibility. Clearly there exists a limit beyond which this knowledge would become harmful.²⁷¹ For this reason it is necessary for the human being to draw a horizon around themselves. Nietzsche states:

And this is universal law: a living thing can be healthy, strong, and fruitful only when bounded by a horizon; if it is incapable of drawing a horizon around itself, and at the same time too self-centered to enclose its own view within that of another, it will pine away or hasten to its timely end. (UM II 1)

Within such a defined horizon, history (or new experiences) can be appropriated; those experiences that lie outside of one's horizon are discarded for the purpose of maintaining the healthy disposition (or healthy digestion) of the organism.

Ultimately, Nietzsche does not treat history as a collection of 'truths' or 'facts', but rather as something that the human being should engage with, reshaping it through interpretive judgment in the service of life. He states:

...thus only through the power of employing the past for purposes of life and of again introducing into history that which has been done and is gone – did man become man: but with an excess of history man again ceases to exist, and without that envelope of the unhistorical he would never have begun or dared to begin. (UM II 1)

It is this element of reshaping that is key here: Nietzsche argues that useful fictions or errors themselves constitute knowledge, rather than supposed truths.

²⁷¹ Consider again the example of my father's fear of Detroit that was generated by the 1967 race rebellion in Detroit. This fear persisted for thirty four years until his death, robbing him (and by extension, my family) of some of the most valuable experiences and opportunities associated with border city life. Another fourteen years after his death, as addressed in the first chapter, his fear still haunted me as I attempted to relate to this city landscape.

The usefulness of such errors, as noted in the title of this section of the *Untimely Meditations*, is determined in terms of 'service to life' which Nietzsche characterizes as an ahistorical power. Here we see a blunt rejection of the primacy of any metaphysical instinct or 'will to truth', or more clearly, a position that treats history as something that must be forcefully appropriated rather than a static collection of facts that fetter a 'man, people, or culture.' Since this ahistorical power in 'historical men' inspires:

...looking to the past impels them towards the future and fires their courage to go on living and their hope that what they want will still happen, that happiness lies behind the hill they are advancing towards. (UM II 1)

Thus, it is not some form of 'pure knowledge' or normative truth written in the codes of pure history which guides the individual, but rather precisely the opposite process. The past is forcefully interpreted and deployed in the service of the present for the sake of a healthy disposition to the future. He further states:

The study of history is something salutary and fruitful for the future only as the attendant of a mighty new current of life, of an evolving culture for example, that is to say only when it is dominated and directed by a higher force and does not itself dominate and direct. (UM II 1)

In this early work, then, we have seen that Nietzsche has three primary concerns. First, he wishes to illustrate that the human being must somehow situate themselves within their historical context insofar as humans must (as Berkowitz notes) live "...in the painful and dizzying awareness not only that the past is always receding and fading from sight, but that happiness is fleeting and the future uncertain"²⁷². Second, Nietzsche's position is one that rejects the notion of the utility of historical 'facts' or 'truths.' He characterizes such a relationship to history in terms of a 'will to truth': "A historical phenomenon,

²⁷² Berkowitz, "Nietzsche's Ethics of History," 13.

known clearly and completely and resolved into a phenomenon of knowledge, is, for him who has perceived it, dead..." (UM II 1) Rather, Nietzsche advocates that people and cultures draw a horizon around themselves appropriate to their shaping power or "...appropriating energy..." (BGE 230) and, within this horizon, engage in drawing forceful judgment laden interpretations of history. Finally, this should all be done in the service of life; that is, for the sake of health and the affirmation of life. Nietzsche's claims are at once descriptive and normative: as we dispose ourselves to history we cannot help but judge and interpret. This judgment and interpretation has a normative quality, although Nietzsche's treatment of this activity is equally a descriptive claim with regard to the situation in which human beings find themselves and the status of historical knowledge. For Nietzsche, there can be no historical knowing that is not also willful activity engaged with the past through active judgment and interpretation. This is why Foucault, in *Language, Counter-memory, and Practice* (in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History") asserts:

The final trait of effective history is its affirmation of knowledge as perspective. Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal their grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy – the unavoidable obstacles of their passion. Nietzsche's vision of historical sense is explicit in its perspective and acknowledges its system of injustice. Its perception is slanted, being a deliberate appraisal, affirmation, or negation; it reaches the lingering and poisonous traces in order to prescribe the best antidote.²⁷³

Foucault follows Nietzsche in identifying three relationships to history, each of which can be potentially held in excess. Nietzsche proposes in *Untimely Meditations*, that it is in terms of these three modes that history can be appropriated usefully and healthily: "...a *monumental*, an *antiquarian* and *critical*

²⁷³ Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 156-157.

species of history.” (UM II 2) Monumental history “...belongs above all to the man of deeds and power, to him who fights a great fight, who needs models, teachers, comforters and cannot find them among his contemporaries.” (UM II 2) Monumental history looks across time to appropriate the inspiration from past deeds, movements, and equals not found in their own epoch. Problematically, this form of history falsifies the past to some extent. As Nietzsche notes:

Monumental history deceives by analogies: with seductive similarities it inspires the courageous to foolhardiness and the inspired to fanaticism; and when we go on to think of this kind of history in the hands and heads of gifted egoists and visionary scoundrels, then we see empires destroyed, princes murdered, wars and revolutions launched and the number of historical ‘effects in themselves,’ that is to say, effects without sufficient cause, again augmented. (UM II 2)

Antiquarian history “...belongs in the second place to him who preserves and reveres – to him who looks back to whence he has come, to where he came into being with love and loyalty; with this piety he as it were gives thanks for his existence.” (UM II 3) This history, as noted in the first chapter, ties one to “...the conditions under which he himself came into existence...” (UM II 3) and most clearly establishes a sense of place. Recall, with regard to antiquarian history:

The history of his city becomes for him the history of himself; he reads its walls, its towered gate, its rules and regulations, its holidays, like an illuminated diary of his youth and in all this he again finds himself, his force, his industry, his joy, his judgment, his folly and vices. Here we lived, he says to himself, for here we are living; and here we shall live, for we are tough and not to be ruined overnight. Thus with the aid of this ‘we’ he looks beyond his own individual transitory existence and feels himself to be the spirit of his house, his race, his city. (UM II 3)

Nietzsche uses the metaphor of a tree that is aware of the size and extent of its root system to illustrate this form of history. While it can serve life to have a keen awareness of these roots, the risk with antiquarian history, of course, is an excess of preservationist drive: “...when the historical sense no longer conserves life but mummifies it, then the tree gradually dies unnaturally from the top

downwards to the roots – and in the end the roots themselves usually perish too.”

(UM II 3) Antiquarian history, by Nietzsche’s estimation, only knows how to preserve without “...instinct for divining it...” (UM II 3) The inspiration of monumental history in excess deceives by presenting false equivalencies; an excess of antiquarian history indiscriminately preserves the past.²⁷⁴ Nietzsche argues of the need for a third mode of history:

...the *critical*: and this, too, in the service of life. If he is to live, man must possess and from time to time employ the strength to break up and dissolve a part of the past: he does this by bringing it before the tribunal, scrupulously examining and finally condemning it; every past, however, is worthy of being condemned – for this is the nature of human things: human violence and weakness have always played a mighty role in them. (UM II 3)

These modes of history must be taken together in the service of life. Effectively they sketch out an *insurgent* disposition to history. The past must be mobilized in the service of a present, and with a view to the future. They call on a person, a culture, or a nation to not merely inhabit their horizon, but to actively engage in the forceful reinterpretation and mobilization of history.

Essentially this is what Foucault argues when he presents a critical analysis of the notions of *descent* (*Herkunft*) and *emergence* (*Entstehung*) in order to situate his treatment of Nietzsche’s genealogy with respect to history. Both of these notions implicit to genealogy, while not presupposing metaphysical roots, have the effect of disturbing foundations dogmatically taken to be immobile. Foucault argues for the importance of the notion of an ‘effective history’ (*wirkliche Historie*) not only in the context of interpreting Nietzsche’s genealogy, but as an effective critical means. Foucault proceeds by highlighting

²⁷⁴ “The fact that something has grown old now gives rise to the demand that it be made immortal...” (UM II 3)

the importance of perspective and the interpretation of a confluence of competing forces when attempting a deployment of Nietzsche's criticisms. *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History* is itself heavily engaged with Nietzsche's middle period and presents the importance of interpreting Nietzsche in a context-specific manner in relation to specific confluences of forces. Moreover, Foucault argues that the destabilizing aspects of genealogy itself have critical force. Make no mistake: this is not merely an internal or 'self-genealogical' project, as Richardson seems to argue. Foucault argues that these modes of history (monumental, antiquarian, and critical history) take on new forms of significance in Nietzsche's later work. By his assessment, the monumental becomes parody, the continuities of antiquarian history instead isolate discontinuities and critical history becomes self-critique. Nonetheless the general thrust of the argument from this early work remains. Engagement with life means to engage with historical and cultural context. There can be no neutral perspective, but rather, only active, engaged, and judgment-laden appropriation of this context (ideally) in the service of life. For Nietzsche's entire advocacy of solitude, this engagement with history involves engagement with the *common* discussed by Hardt and Negri, with place as advocated by Jacobs and Boggs, and ultimately with the social, material and cultural conditions that bring about your way of life.

In the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche asserts that "...perspectivity..." is "...that fundamental condition of all life..." (BGE "Preface") He expands this treatment of perspectivity in his *Genealogy of Morals*, when he forcefully asserts:

Perspectival seeing is the *only* kind of seeing there is, perspectival 'knowing' is the *only* kind of 'knowing'; and the *more* eyes, different eyes through which we are able to view this same matter, the more complete our 'conception' of it, our 'objectivity', will be. But to eliminate the will completely, to suspend the feelings altogether, even assuming that we could do so: what? would this not amount to the *castration* of the intellect?... (GM III 12)

Janaway notes that the dominant moral, epistemological, and scientific position ("...the philosophical orthodoxy...") holds that the affects and will "... 'twist, colour, and distort' judgment and perception..."²⁷⁵ Nietzsche, on the other hand, sees these affects as "...enabling and expanding knowledge."²⁷⁶ There are twin elements to this argument presented by Nietzsche. First, the orthodox epistemological standards of "...objectivity..." and "...disinterested contemplation..."²⁷⁷ are shams. This is sufficiently supported by the sustained criticism of the 'will to truth' presented in *Beyond Good and Evil* and illustrated nicely by Nietzsche's claim that

...every great philosophy to date has been: the personal confession of its author, a kind of unintended and unwitting memoir; and similarly, that all the moral (or immoral) aims in every philosophy constituted the actual seed from which the whole plant invariably grew. (BGE 6)

The drives and affects, as much as a researcher would like to keep them in brackets, inevitably work their way in. Every methodology, as the basis for methodology (which would purport to bracket these drives and affects) is governed by a set of interests, drives, and affects. There exists, by Nietzsche's estimation, no pure 'instinct for knowledge' that works as "...some independent clockwork which when properly wound up, works away bravely *without* necessarily involving all the scholar's other instincts." (BGE 6) Even if it were possible for such a drive to hold sway (and interestingly it would still be a drive),

²⁷⁵ Janaway, "Autonomy, Affect, and the Self," 52.

²⁷⁶ Janaway, "Autonomy, Affect, and the Self," 52.

²⁷⁷ Janaway, "Autonomy, Affect, and the Self," 52.

Nietzsche notes that this would amount to ‘castration of the intellect’. There is no knowing without will, and there is no will that is not a constellation of competing drives and affects grounded in the exigencies of context. Knowledge is, therefore, never innocent.

Second, as Janaway notes, “...feelings themselves have cognitive potency.”²⁷⁸ It is by taking up many perspectives that we expand our cognitive grasp of reality. As early as his treatment of character in *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche argues that spiritual progress relies upon a healthy and strong organism’s ability to appropriate that which is foreign – effectively a foreign affect. In “Tokens of Higher and Lower Culture,” Nietzsche describes a productive tension which he claims is all important for cultural and spiritual progress in terms of the apparent opposition between that part of a nation that preserves itself best, and that of the degenerate nature within the nation. (HH I 224) In the opening section of “Tokens of Higher and Lower Culture” it becomes quite clear that Nietzsche depends on the context of this opposition as the basis for privileging these iconoclastic immoralists and degenerate natures alike. (HH I 224) Nietzsche establishes two opposing poles which pertain to both a culture (nation) and the individual.

Again oscillating by speaking in terms of both a nation and the individual human being, Nietzsche argues that it is necessary to have two elements which taken together constitute the health of the organism and which are the preconditions for ‘spiritual progress.’ First, in terms of a culture, a strong and stable element with dogmatically held principles must be present and serves as

²⁷⁸ Janaway, “Autonomy, Affect, and the Self,” 54.

the basis. Secondly, it is necessary that morally weaker, unfettered delinquents arise who would inflict injury or a partial weakening upon the culture in question. While the stable elements of a culture preserve themselves best, Nietzsche admonishes that the danger that follows all stability is a growing stupidity. This can be described as a sort of categorical sclerosis – a hardening of the categories – resulting from the stable elements of culture holding fast to a small number of dogmatically held beliefs and principles. A culture's dogmatically held habitual beliefs and undiscussable principles remain rigid in the face of a changing context, thus failing to meet each new crisis-context productively. This element of a culture is nonetheless productive insofar as it establishes the identity and defines the spirit of a culture. In his treatment of 'good and strong character,' then, it is not surprising that Nietzsche finds it necessary to oscillate between this element of culture and individual 'good characters.' This is because, by Nietzsche's estimation, individuals of this sort do not distinguish themselves to a significant degree from the dogmatically held principles of the larger culture.

Those of good and strong character are quick to act, since the avenues and options open to them are constrained, produced, and reinforced by the larger culture. In *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche identifies such closing off of perspectives as being (here with regard to the *ascetic ideal*) "...derived from the protective and healing instincts of a degenerating life, which seeks to preserve itself and fights for existence with any available means..." (GM III 13) While those of good and strong character draw a good deal of energy and self-protection from the support of cultural dogmas and judgments, they are constrained by these

dogmas and judgments regarding perhaps only two possibilities. On the other hand, those of strong spirit consider a vast number of possibilities and they are thus more uncertain and slower to act. This strength of spirit is necessary insofar as these individuals act outside of the normal judgment boundaries and limits of the larger culture. Simply stated, they introduce new perspectives.

To spur this element of stable culture on toward spiritual progress, individuals with fewer moral ties to the larger culture – degenerate natures – are necessary. Nietzsche states of the degenerate natures:

Countless numbers of this kind perish on account of their weakness without producing any very visible effect; but in general, and especially when they leave posterity, they effect a loosening up and from time to time inflict an injury on the stable element of a community. It is precisely at this injured and weakened spot that the whole body is as it were *inoculated* with something new; its strength must, however, be as a whole sufficient to receive this new thing into its blood and to assimilate it. (HH I 224)

As we can see, Nietzsche uses a biologically rooted metaphor to understand the inner workings of cultural and spiritual progress. The stable element preserves the culture, while the degenerate nature by wounding this element propels it toward change and ‘spiritual progress.’ The degeneracy of the ‘degenerate nature’ should be understood in much the same way as Nietzsche characterizes the free spirit: as “...*a relative concept*...” (HH I 225) The key notion in delineating the ‘degenerate’ from ‘firm-charactered individuals’ as it is presented in the early sections of “Tokens of Higher and Lower Culture” is that they are comparatively “...unfettered, uncertain, and morally weaker...” (HH I 224) That is, they are not fettered.²⁷⁹ The degenerate is not served by the practices, moral

²⁷⁹ “Of four species of things the fettered spirits say they are in the right. Firstly: all things that possess duration are in the right; secondly: all things that do not inconvenience us are in the right; thirdly: all things that bring us advantage are in the right; fourthly: all things for which we have

customs, and habitual principles that provide advantage to those of firm character, thereby incentivizing these individuals to act against the grain of these common practices, customs, and principles. Degeneracy, then, is a necessary dispositional precondition for the possibility of insurgency, but not sufficient since, as we noted in the passage above, “Countless numbers of this kind perish on account of their weakness without producing any very visible effect...” (HH I 224) Nietzsche moves from a discussion of the degenerate to his treatment of the *free spirit*, who has “...the superior quality and sharpness of his intellect ...written on the face of the free spirit in characters clear enough even for the fettered spirit to read.” (HH I 225)

“Tokens of Higher and Lower Culture” is interesting insofar as this description of the forces at work to produce the nation describes not only individuals within the nation but also forces at work within the individual. As Gemes notes of this tension within the individual:

...unification is not the result of a conscious subject pruning an over luxuriant garden of drives according to some articulate master plan. Rather, drives come with their own telic structure. In most individuals conflicting drives can only express themselves through the repression of other drives.²⁸⁰

Thus, it can be consistently argued that both the individual and the nation are constituted by the tensions and oppositions described here through mutually supportive and productive opposition in a manner partially described by

made a sacrifice are in the right. ... The free spirits who urge their cause before the forum of the fettered spirits have to demonstrate that there have always been free spirits, that is to say that free spiritedness possesses duration, then that they do not desire to inconvenience, and finally that on the whole they bring advantage to the fettered spirits; but because they cannot convince the fettered spirits of this last it is of no use to them to have demonstrated the first and second points.” (HH I 229)

²⁸⁰ Ken Gemes, “Postmodernism’s Use and Abuse of Nietzsche,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Mar., 2001), 344.

Richardson's account of Nietzschean freedom outlined above. Within a nation, a degenerate should be read as something akin to a drive or passion opposed to the hierarchy of drives, though in a manner that dwells within this opposition. The free spirit, on the other hand, carries the significance of being an effective drive, one that has "...liberated himself from tradition..." (HH I 225) capable of maintaining a positive and creative disposition, capable "...of living and thinking a *refined heroism* which disdains to offer itself to the veneration of the great masses..." (HH I 291) Employing a gardening metaphor compatible with that offered by Gemes, Nietzsche argues in "the Wanderer and his Shadow":

Overcoming of the passions. – The man who has overcome his passions has entered into possession of the most fertile ground; like the colonist who has mastered the forests and swamps. To sow the seeds of good spiritual works in the soil of the subdued passions is then the immediate urgent task. The overcoming itself is only a *means*, not a goal; if it is not so viewed, all kinds of weeds and devilish nonsense will quickly spring up in this rich soil now unoccupied, and soon there will be more rank confusion than there ever was before. (WS 53)

This apparently violent value opposition is, by the assessment developed here, one of interdependence when observed in terms of spiritual progress.

Again, in *The Genealogy of Morals* III 12, Nietzsche notes:

...the *desire* to see differently for once in this way is no small discipline of the intellect and a preparation for its eventual 'objectivity' – this latter understood not as 'disinterested contemplation' (which is a non-concept and a nonsense), but as the capacity to have all the arguments for and against *at one's disposal* and to suspend or implement them at will: so as to exploit that very *diversity* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the interest of knowledge. (GM III 12)

While this is the case, the opposition of these interdependent poles (both within the individual and a culture) must be experienced as true conflict on both sides and moreover this conflict must be viscerally felt and passionate. What is truly interesting in this section of the text is that this struggle, insofar as it is passionate and visceral, always occurs in the context of a crisis that is usually

physiological in nature. What is productive here is the tension itself, and not either of the positions that constitute said tension. Neither is correct in an absolute sense, but rather it is their opposition which is productive. Franco notes:

That we cannot completely dispense with error and illusion Nietzsche makes clear in an aphorism on the 'double brain' required by higher culture. Because it is the *quest* for knowledge that makes science pleasurable, not the possession of it, science will provides [sic] us with less and less pleasure the more it accumulates its solid and disillusioning truths.²⁸¹

Consistent with what was argued in the *Untimely Meditations* with regard to our deployment of history, history is not a 'true' history, but rather a forceful and beneficial interpretation that preserves and is invigorated by its past yet has the capacity to dissolve that same past. Likewise, both forces which constitute this tension are necessary, and only when taken together, do they produce a healthy organism capable of expressing values which meet the challenges and needs of a particular historical and cultural context. The following chapters will lay out this tension between the dominant value assumptions of the culture within the deindustrializing Windsor/ Detroit region and the *insurgencies* of activist movements that disrupt and interrupt these dominating and habitual social structures.

Here it is important to note one of the first things Nietzsche argues. In the first section of "Tokens of Higher and Lower Culture" Nietzsche states: "A people that becomes somewhere weak and fragile but is as a whole still strong and healthy is capable of absorbing the infection of the new and incorporating it to its

²⁸¹ Paul Franco, "Nietzsche's 'Human, All Too Human' and the Problem of Culture, *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (Spring, 2007), 238.

own advantage.” (HH I 224) Note that this statement is effectively conditional. The effectiveness of critical wounds to a culture (or, by extension an individual) is dependent on the relative strength or “...appropriating energy...” (BGE 230) of the whole. Thus, the strength of the relative forces which constitute these tensions would be an important element of the context in which criticism occurs. An individual or culture too weak to productively assimilate the effects of this infection would necessitate differing criticisms and prescriptions relative to one of sufficient strength to withstand such partial wounding. Such a culture may need to adopt “...a kind of defensive posture against much potential knowledge, being content with a limited horizon...” (BGE 230) Again, we find that taking into account the context in which a criticism or ‘wound’ is offered would be an important task if one is to apply and deploy a Nietzschean form of criticism. Thus, just as the quanta of history that are healthy for an individual, a people or a culture, must be understood relative to the plastic power or appropriating energy of said individual/ people/ culture, critical wounding must be understood in much the same manner. Thus, Nietzsche is not bluntly affirmative of critical activities of delinquents or free spirits. The value of these activities must be understood in terms of context with a view to the health and vitality of whatever organism is involved.

2.4 New Category of Philosopher and Community

Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, argues the need for a 'new category of philosophers' which he claims was on the rise. These 'very free spirits' will herald in new sorts of engagement, investigation, and experimentation. These

philosophers, Nietzsche argues, will start from their rootedness within a situation, disposing themselves to their questions experimentally, perspectively, agonistically, and yet in a life-affirming manner. For Nietzsche we must start by understanding that we have assumptions and interests, and that we are at work within a tradition and directed toward a set of problems which is always bound up with a power structure.

Nietzsche pictures these new philosophers as *insurgents*, working within the dominant power structures of culture, and subverting these structures. The notion of *insurgency* has two central notions contained within it: 1) to rise against or oppose a (political) power structure, and 2) this power structure is in some sense their own (that of their own country). From our treatment of Nietzsche's notion of agency above, we can see that the individual is constituted by a tension between the limiting structures of the common and an agonistic disposition to this common. The very notion of freedom developed by Nietzsche would have us dispose ourselves in an oppositional manner to that which is foreign to our interests, yet constitutive of our own reflective consciousness. Richardson notes:

What we see, as we consider more closely, is that although Nietzsche attacks and warns against 'the common', he also recognizes the necessity and value of it, and once again, on both epistemic and existential grounds. We can't but be common, firstly and mostly, and our principal aims also lead us there. So in trying to be individuals our task is not to wean ourselves as much as we can from the common or to reduce to the lowest degree our membership in community; we may even enter it more passionately than before. What is needed is rather that one establish a space for individuality and, to the extent that one can, join community *from* this. We thereby take an *active* stance toward the common, both in us and without.²⁸²

Nietzsche asserts of these new philosophers:

...it is certain that they will not be dogmatists. It would surely go against their pride, and also against their good taste, if their truth had to be a truth for everyone else, too - this

²⁸² John Richardson, "Nietzsche, Language, Community", in *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*, 233.

has been the secret wish and ulterior thought in all earlier dogmatic endeavours. (BGE 43)

It is safe to assume that these experimenters and philosophers will embody Nietzsche's arguments about the instrumental status of value and judgment as well as his critical disposition to systems of knowledge and politics. Values, judgments, knowledge and political systems will not, for these new critics and activists, be taken as 'givens,' but rather treated as structures of power against which to test one's will. Since this notion of experimentation is key for Nietzsche, it is clear that many and varied dispositions to the structures of power (epistemic, moral, political, etc.) must be enacted and lived publically rather than merely reflectively evaluated. Richardson continues:

The key value for Nietzsche is power (life), not truth, and he thinks this rises highest in exceptional individuals. Yet even such individuals, he thinks, depend on a ground of commonness in themselves; their individuality is built on it. And they become individuals not by opposing or avoiding these commons, but by entering them more actively than before. Instead of passively receiving the shared stance, they work on this common by infusing their individual quality into it. It is by this thrust back into the common that the individual achieves that highest power.²⁸³

Nietzsche's position reveals itself to be one that advocates a sort of permanent critical engagement hostile to notions of enduring ideals or principles. At best, ideals and principles would serve to bolster the stable and dogmatic elements of a culture or individual world-view which attempt to preserve themselves. At worst, these principles and ideals serve to stifle a culture or individual, as Nietzsche argues is the case with Christian dogma. Instead, we must, by this argument, approach all such principles with healthy and life-affirming cynicism. Nonetheless, it is important to understand the value implicit to the oppositional tensions, understanding the value of having enemies and

²⁸³ Richardson, "Nietzsche, Language, Community", 239.

opposition in the manner Nietzsche advocates for the immoralist²⁸⁴ in *Twilight of the Idols*:

We who are different, we immoralists, on the contrary, have opened our hearts to all kinds of understanding, comprehending, *approving*. We do not readily deny; we seek our honour in being *affirmative*. More and more our eyes have been opened to that economy which still needs and can exploit all that is rejected by the holy madness of the priest, of the priest's *sick* reason; to that economy in the law of life which can gain advantage even from the repulsive species of the miseryguts, the priest, the virtuous man – *what* advantage? – But we ourselves, we immoralists are the answer here... (TI "Morality as Anti-Nature" 6)

Effectively there is no 'outside' from culture, history, or generally context.

There is no heaven of ideas into which one can retreat. This is the force of Nietzsche's argument: we are all partisan and implicated. Accordingly Nietzsche advocates dispositions that foster active engagement with life (history, culture, place, the systems and power structures that we inhabit, etc.) since, for Nietzsche, to know these structures of our context is to know ourselves. There is no possibility that this can be done passively or from a perspective of disinterest. Nor is there a possibility that a healthy disposition to life can be bought 'off the rack', so to speak. These systems are our own and we must assert ourselves over and against them. *We are insurgents*.

²⁸⁴ We find the immorality of the 'immoralist' referenced in connection to the discussion of the free-spirit offered by Nietzsche in *Human All Too Human*: "If the free spirits are right, the fettered spirits are wrong, regardless of whether the former have arrived at the truth by way of immorality or the latter have hitherto cleaved to untruth out of morality. – In any event, however, what characterizes the free spirit is not that his opinions are the more correct but that he has liberated himself from tradition, whether the outcome has been successful or a failure." (HH I 225) See also BGE 226-228, where Nietzsche discusses the immoralist (in the context of a 'we' which implies that this characterization applies to the new philosopher) as being "...entangled in an unyielding snare and straitjacket of duties, and *cannot* get free – in this sense we too are 'duty-bound people', even we!" In BGE 210-228 Nietzsche provides an outline of the necessary traits and dispositions of his new category of philosophers: "...he even needs to have been a critic and a sceptic and a dogmatist and an historian, and in addition a poet and collector and traveller and puzzle-solver and moralist and seer and 'free spirit' and nearly all things..." (BGE 211)

In the next chapter we shall carry forward this notion of an active and engaged, culturally, historically rooted insurgent into dialogue with Hardt and Negri, and Horkheimer and Adorno in order to reinvigorate and appropriate the strongest aspects of their critical perspectives. In light of this discussion we will attempt to distill what Boggs and Boggs refer to as "...a philosophy of revolution..."²⁸⁵ that can grasp the latent capacities present in the context of deindustrializing Windsor and Detroit by examining several cases of community organizations and artist collectives who are innovatively and experimentally engaging with how they are where they are. These context rooted projects, we shall see, express elements of this Nietzschean notion of *insurgency*.

We must, however, be careful not to congratulate the politics that have brought about these capacities within this historical and cultural context. We should note with Nietzsche that it is because of the weakness of the political institutions in Windsor and Detroit, not because of their strength that these critical opportunities have emerged. In *Human, all too Human*, (as Sluga notes) Nietzsche asserts:

...we should thus realize that it is usually on the political sickbed that a nation "rejuvenates itself... and rediscovers its spirit, which it gradually lost in its seeking for and assertion of power. Culture owes the most to the ages of political weakness" (HH I 465).²⁸⁶

As the institutional and physical structures that ground deindustrializing Windsor and Detroit crumble into corruption and abject disrepair, it is the sphere of culture that begins to assert itself with uncommon energy, taking on many of the roles that the political apparatus is unable or unwilling to fulfill.

²⁸⁵ Boggs and Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution*, 15.

²⁸⁶ Hans Sluga, "The Time Is Coming When One Will Have to Relearn about Politics," in *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*, 45.

Throughout this chapter we have developed an interpretation of Nietzsche that can serve as a model for the embedded practices of activists and community collectives active in Windsor and Detroit. Through practice – practice that theory limps slowly after – individuals, collectives, and neighbourhood cooperatives engage with Detroit in a manner that Herscher (with regard to what he calls ‘Municipal Therapy’ in Detroit) characterizes as one that “...asserts a right to the city – a right that is often forgotten or even abandoned when urban life functions according to plan.”²⁸⁷ These individuals, collectives, and neighbourhood cooperatives coalesce into a movement that, for Boggs, calls for a robust notion of affirmative human sustainability that allows human capacities to be expressed and realized rather than stifled by the institutions in power and the dominant values of our culture or age. Self-*insurgency* shows itself necessary precondition for the possibility of effective embedded engagement through experimental practice in the context of urban landscapes in massive states of transition, since at all levels history, affective dispositions and habitual principles and values tend to reinforce the previous embodiments of a stable culture. Effective activist practice engages not only the overt political structures that stifle the expression of human capacities, but also the affective and psychic sediment produced by these structures in an *insurgent* manner. To reference an adage my father would often repeat, one that oddly echoes the general sentiment of Nietzsche’s normative position, ‘The only thing that keeps most people from doing anything is themselves.’ Nietzsche offers a mechanism by which we can overcome the value presuppositions and affective dispositions that hold us within the “...snare

²⁸⁷ Herscher, *Guide*, 64.

and social strait jacket of duties...” (BGE 226), thus allowing embedded activist practice to be creative, affirmative, engaged and experimental. To be sure, such practice discussed as engagement does not overcome or free us from the tensions introduced by Nietzsche in *Human, All Too Human*, but rather engages forcefully and creatively within these tensions. By Nietzsche’s model, the notions of *insurgency* and *self-insurgency* allows us not to escape or transcend the powers that constrain us, but allows us to critically and productively “...dance in our ‘chains’” (BGE 226)



Figure 2.2 *West Detroit from West Windsor.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

3

Embedded Embodied Criticism

And by your desiring with all your strength to see ahead how the knot of the future is going to be tied, your own life will acquire the value of an instrument and means of knowledge. You have it in your hands to achieve the absorption of all you experience – your experiments, errors, faults, delusions, passions, your love and your hope – into your goal without remainder. This goal is yourself to become a necessary chain of rings of culture and from this necessity to recognize the necessity inherent in the course of culture in general. (HH I 292)

Rick Roderick, who was a philosophy professor at Duke University, was best known for three lecture series composed for ‘The Teaching Company’: *Philosophy and Human Values* (1990), *Nietzsche and the Postmodern Condition* (1991), and *The Self Under Siege – Philosophy in the 20th Century* (1993). In his first lecture; “Socrates and the Life of Inquiry” (in *Philosophy and Human Values*), Roderick argues that there are historical conditions necessary to bring about the possibility for philosophical inquiry, specifically regarding terms that hold a society together. Socratic questioning of terms like ‘courage’, he argues, would have made no sense in the context of a cohesive and unified society or in the context of a shared experience that gives that society confidence in those terms. In such a cohesive and unified society, terms like ‘courage’, ‘justice’ or ‘piety’ could easily be handled by a dictionary since their meanings would be unproblematic in the context of that society. Of what he calls “...the human edge of philosophy...” Roderick argues:

The point is that philosophy – philosophical inquiry, of the dangerous kind, as opposed to the analytic, boring, academic kind – philosophic inquiry of the dangerous kind catches a society at a moment when it’s insecure about what the main terms that hold it together mean. Like man, woman, patriot, and in particular: “human being”. So that is the human edge of philosophy. It’s that you catch society at a moment of danger when a term or a

set of terms that are very important to the identity of a lot of people are in question. Or possible. That the questioning of it is at least possible. It may be that we are today.²⁸⁸

Socrates, Roderick argues, caught society at a moment, when it was insecure about such terms. Theoretical inquiry can be potent in this respect, though Roderick argues that the position taken up by Socrates,

...shouldn't be understood the way we understand inquiry today; as just sitting on your butt and looking through a microscope – no – inquiry in Socrates' sense, critical inquiry, is to go around in a kind of passionate search, for what's really important.²⁸⁹

Inquiry, in the sense that Roderick draws out of Socrates, was meant to express most fully our human capacities and it was a form of engagement with the human project as it plays itself out in, for Socrates, specifically public and urban settings. The fullest notion of this sort of inquiry would put the inquirer on the spot, produce discomfort, and has potency: the capacity to change the way the inquirer thinks and acts. For Socrates, the medium of inquiry is dialogue that is both situated and timely. Given the argument distilled out of an interpretation of Nietzsche in the preceding chapter, insofar as Nietzsche can be considered to also engage in such dialogue utilizing differing methods and issuing differing judgments, we should expand this notion of inquiry to include practice, experimentation, and *insurgency*.

Roderick sees philosophy as fundamentally engaged with the pressing issues that consume a culture. Inquiry in its fullest sense is situated and mobilizes the historical potential of its context, not only to console a culture in its weaker moments, but also to reinvigorate the central ideas of that culture in order

²⁸⁸ Rick Roderick, "Philosophy and Human Values Lecture 1: Socrates and the Life of Inquiry," (Video lecture with transcript recorded for The Teaching Company, Virginia, 1990), Accessed March 20, 2016. <http://rickroderick.org/101-socrates-and-the-life-of-inquiry-1990/>.

²⁸⁹ Rick Roderick, "Socrates and the Life of Inquiry," Accessed March 20, 2016.

to produce a meaningful framework for practice. As we have seen, this aspect of historicism is present in Nietzsche's work. For Nietzsche, the death of God was a historical moment that made an entire line of moral and post-metaphysical questioning possible. Nietzsche's 1886 proclamation, in the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil* that in Europe there exists a "...splendid tension of spirit..." (BGE "Preface") relies upon the historical culmination of "...the struggle against thousands of years of Christian-ecclesiastical pressure..." (BGE "Preface").

Nietzsche saw the moment facing European culture as one that fundamentally unsettled the meaning-context that sustained the culture. It is in this sense that, in air filled with the smell of "...the divine decomposition..." (GS 125), Nietzsche asserts: "There was never a greater deed – and whoever is born after us will on account of this deed belong to a higher history than all history up to now!" (GS 125) Even still, in this key passage from *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche's madman was met by silence, resistance, and disbelief. Like Socrates, who was executed for producing his disquieting inquiry, Nietzsche's unsettling inquiry naturally is met by counter-revolutionary forces in the form of "...elaborate attempts to loosen the bow..." (BGE "Preface") There are historical moments and conditions under which it becomes possible to raise questions, when a people or culture becomes "...uncertain and morally weaker..." (HH I 224), effectively less served by shared "...habitual and undiscussable principles..." (HH I 224). It may be at these moments and within these contexts, Nietzsche argues, that "...redemption from the curse [of] the previous ideal ..." (GM II 24) is possible. To meet these counter-revolutionary forces and mobilize the capacities of the present historical

moment, activists in Windsor and Detroit assume an *insurgent* disposition towards the cultural and political structures that embody these habitual principles. This is not a movement generated by theory, but one that is embodied and generated through the practices and experiments of the dispossessed multitude within this deindustrializing region.

What follows will articulate the critical force that rests implicitly within artist and activist practice in the context of an historical, transitional moment in these deindustrializing cities. As we examine these critical practices we will mobilize and expand the notion of *insurgency* arising out of the interpretation of Nietzsche developed in the second chapter. Many of these activist and artist actions are catalogued by Andrew Herscher in his *The Unreal Estate Guide To Detroit*, although the project of the analysis provided by Herscher aims to catalogue and edify rather than mobilize toward cultural and political action. Though this disposition was critiqued heavily in the first chapter for its normative evasiveness, what follows will utilize Herscher's *Guide* as a guide, but will draw out the critical and projective implications of these actions so as to not merely edify, but mobilize.

The artist and activist actions detailed by Herscher under headings such as "Municipal Therapy,"²⁹⁰ "Feral Research,"²⁹¹ "Radical Hospitality,"²⁹² "Patrimony of the Unlost"²⁹³, etc. represent interconnected forms of struggle. They exist in that space where culture and politics meet, insofar as they assert a

²⁹⁰ Herscher, *Guide*, 64.

²⁹¹ Herscher, *Guide*, 106.

²⁹² Herscher, *Guide*, 144.

²⁹³ Herscher, *Guide*, 272.

right, they implicitly dispose themselves to systems of governance critically, and they propose new forms of value and urban life. Herscher productively highlights many of these happenings whose genesis depends upon being mostly overlooked by city systems, and when noticed, are frequently disposed diffidently to municipal authorities.

One specific weakness of Herscher's *Guide*, however, arises from its catalogue structure which tends to treat the interventions it examines as though they are isolated happenings. These actions and interventions are situated in mutual and connected relations with one another, within the topographic and psychic landscape where action is mobilized, and in the context of urban crisis and deindustrialization, so that, as Nietzsche notes, "...every action performed by a human being becomes in some way the cause of other actions, decisions, thoughts, that everything that happens is inextricably knotted to everything that will happen..." (HH I 208) In the organizations that were spearheaded by Grace and Jimmy Boggs (Detroit Summer, The Boggs Educational Center, and The Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership), for example, the categories deployed by Herscher - Food Infill, Radical Hospitality, Municipal Therapy, etc.- are intimately tied together as part of what is self-described as the building of a movement that aims to "...devote ...creative and collective energies toward envisioning and building a radically different form of living."²⁹⁴ These organizations, spearheaded by Boggs and Boggs, further operate as collaboration hubs between other community organizations and artist collectives, regional, national, and international. In this manner, these artist and activist

²⁹⁴ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 134.

institutions build collaborative hubs that legitimize themselves in a manner, as Hardt and Negri argue, "...that does not rely on the sovereignty of the people but is based instead in the biopolitical productivity of the multitude"²⁹⁵, one based on "...the daily struggles of the workers themselves, their coordinated acts of resistance, insubordination, and subversion of the relations of domination in the workplace and in society at large."²⁹⁶

The meaning of work, education, economy, and the fundamental nature of our relationships to one another as city dwellers have become the subject of disquieting inquiry in the context of deindustrializing Windsor and Detroit. The abandonment of the physical landscape and palpable sense of crisis within these cities testifies to the urgency of this inquiry. To illustrate, summarizing the current state of Detroit, Le Duff reflects:

It is an eerie and angry place of deserted factories and homes and forgotten people. Detroit, which once led the nation in home ownership, is now a foreclosure capital. Its downtown is a museum of ghost skyscrapers. Trees and switchgrass and wild animals have come back to reclaim their rightful places. Coyotes are here. The pigeons have left in droves. A city the size of San Francisco and Manhattan could neatly fit into Detroit's vacant lots, I am told.

Once the nation's richest big city, Detroit is now its poorest. It is the country's illiteracy and dropout capital, where children must leave their books at school and bring toilet paper from home. It is the unemployment capital, where half the adult population does not work at a consistent job. There are firemen with no boots, cops with no cars, teachers with no pencils, city council members with telephones tapped by the FBI, and too many grandmothers with no tears left to give.²⁹⁷

Similarly, there exists the palpable sense in Windsor of having been forgotten, being leftover, or being surplus as a region. In 2010 a Windsor man stood in public places (busy street corners, the city market parking lot, etc.) holding a sign that read "Will Work for Food" for six months. General Motors retirees sit at a bar

²⁹⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 79.

²⁹⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 80.

²⁹⁷ LeDuff, *Detroit*, 4-5.

(Kilroys) at the corner of Kildare Road and Shepherd Street in Windsor watching as the Windsor Transmission Plant, a plant that sustained generations of their family, is torn down for scrap.

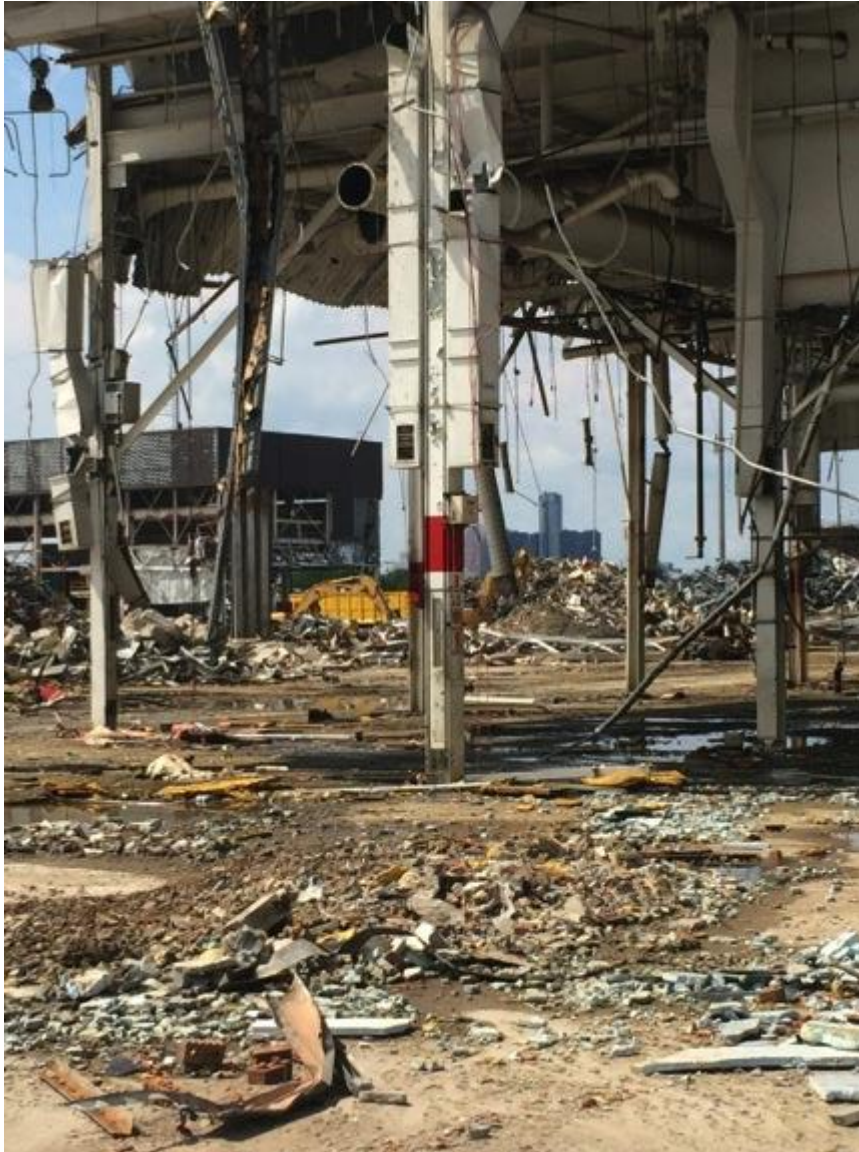


Figure 7.1 Detroit RenCen through Windsor GM Assembly Demolition, Walker Road. August 18, 2016. Windsor, ON. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

In October of 2015, the Windsor Welcome sign, which officially reads “Automotive Capital of Canada”, was illicitly altered to read “Unemployment Capital of Canada” when the city again topped the national unemployment

statistics (as it frequently does). It is a commonly held belief in Windsor that, as far as the provincial and federal governments are concerned, Canada stops at London, Ontario. Windsor understands itself to be the Canada that Canada forgot.



Figure 3.2 *Welcome to Windsor.* August 10, 2016. Windsor, ON. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

It is in this context that the artist collective 'Broken City Lab' gained a foothold in Windsor. They describe themselves as:

...an artist-led interdisciplinary collective and non-profit organization working to explore and unfold curiosities around locality, infrastructures, education, and creative practice leading towards civic change.²⁹⁸

Through several artist-led projects and interventions, Broken City Lab invited Windsor residents to collectively re-imagine and re-assert Windsor's relationship

²⁹⁸ Broken City Lab, "About Broken City Lab," Accessed March 22, 2016. <http://www.brokencitylab.org/about/>.

to itself with the purported goal to “Save the City.”²⁹⁹ It is only in the context of crisis that a place can see itself as ‘broken’ and in need of ‘saving.’ When city systems and infrastructure function in a way that meets the apparent material and communal needs of its residents, critical re-imaginings typically do not gain a foothold, let alone the high degree of public and institutional support garnered by this artist initiative between 2008 and 2014. It was in Windsor, March of 2013, as a respondent for the Canadian book launch for the *Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit* hosted by Broken City Lab at their research hub: *Civic Space*³⁰⁰ that I first met Andrew Herscher.

3.1 Mobilized Crisis

Herscher argues in *The Unreal Estate Guide To Detroit*, that Detroit “...partakes of the possibilities brought about by emergency, and, as such, is one among the global ensemble of similar urban sites.”³⁰¹ Although, as we have seen from our discussion of his work in the first chapter, Herscher resists attempts to read these ‘happenings’ as activist, he argues nonetheless (following Boggs) that these possibilities, “...open into alternative ways of imagining,

²⁹⁹ Broken City Lab, “Broken City Lab Projects,” Accessed March 22, 2016.

<http://www.brokencitylab.org/projects/>. “Save The City” was the title of a series of interventions and workshops by Broken City Lab in 2010. They describe the project as follows: “Over five months, the *Save the City* project will bring together emerging artists and city residents to imagine and prompt creative social engagements and civic activation. Within the project’s series of five activities, the content of each activity will be based on a creative interaction with a part of Windsor’s current and historical social, economic, and regional culture.”

³⁰⁰ Broken City Lab, “Broken City Lab Projects,” Accessed March 22, 2016. “*CIVIC SPACE (Community Innovation through Vital Interactions & Collaboration)* serves as a hub for a range of events, public activities, and research around locality, infrastructure, education, and creative practice as a driver for civic change. This storefront space hosts community projects, artist residencies, DIY workshops, public lectures and a range of other initiatives rooted in arts, community, collaboration, and problem solving. CIVIC SPACE closed in May 2014.”

³⁰¹ Herscher, *Guide*, 15.

building and inhabiting the city.”³⁰² Similar to the argumentative line regarding suffering taken up by Nietzsche, Herscher argues that the pain of an urban context brings about, occasions, and makes necessary new possibilities and new understandings of what it means to be urban. Herscher writes with regard to projects that he understands under the heading of ‘Municipal Therapy’:

Where there is pain, there is an opportunity to provide therapy. Municipal therapists take on pain at the scale of the city appropriating responsibility for urban repair from the authorities and institutions to which that responsibility has been delegated. In so doing, municipal therapy asserts a right to the city – a right that is often forgotten or even abandoned when urban life functions according to plan.

Municipal therapy reveals how the city opens precisely when it fails. While these failures are manifold in the city of unreal estate, so, too, are the therapies that these failures invoke. Damaged homes can be repaired, fallow land can be replanted, space can be provided for exchange, socializing, or remembrance of the forgotten; for any urban failure, or even missed urban opportunity, there is an opportunity for a therapeutic response.³⁰³

For Herscher, when the city functions reasonably well and in a manner that meets most of the needs of those that inhabit the urban landscape, questions of what it means to inhabit that urban landscape tend not to arise. When these needs go unmet by the city, organizations like the Detroit Mower Gang step in to assert this “...responsibility for urban repair...”³⁰⁴ thereby asserting “...a right to the city”.³⁰⁵ The mower gang, “...was formed as a group of public service vigilantes, dedicated to the upkeep of the city’s neglected parks.”³⁰⁶ Partaking of the pleasure that this group finds in collective mowing on lawn tractors, it represents “...one part cleanup effort and one part biker rally...”³⁰⁷ The mower gang illicitly maintains a number of neglected parks around the city and has

³⁰² Herscher, *Guide*, 15.

³⁰³ Herscher, *Guide*, 64.

³⁰⁴ Herscher, *Guide*, 64.

³⁰⁵ Herscher, *Guide*, 64.

³⁰⁶ Herscher, *Guide*, 82.

³⁰⁷ Herscher, *Guide*, 82.

taken part in the maintenance and partial reconstruction of the infield of the former Tiger Stadium. As Herscher notes, “Through this work, the Mower Gang renders park maintenance a public right – the right of the public to care for spaces it cares about.”³⁰⁸

It is only at the point of urban crisis, crisis such as that faced by cities in massive states of transition like Windsor and Detroit, that the adequacy of the procedures and city systems, and moreover, our various senses of what it means to be urban are called into question. It is against the backdrop of this landscape that the contradictions between our ideals and how these ideals are put into actual practice become most glaring. Here, in light of the argument presented by Herscher, it becomes necessary to assert a right to the city in the context of the often belligerent failing city systems. Of this right, Herscher claims:

The study of everyday and informal practices is often suffused with a desire to endow those practices with resistant or critical force. The urbanism of unreal estate, however, does not mount a critique as much as it claims a right: the right not to be excluded from the city by an inequitable and unjust system of ownership and wealth distribution. Claims to this right run the gamut from recuperative,³⁰⁹ through reformist, to radical, so that the politics of unreal estate are various.

Thus, Herscher resists politicizing or expressing an overt critical disposition taken up by those projects that embody his notion of unreal estate. The politics of unreal estate, he argues, is “...a politics devoid of aspirations to govern...”³¹⁰, thus diffusing the critical roots and activist political potential in many of the projects with which he engages.

The understanding of ‘political’ employed by Herscher is reductive: he reduces politics to governance and thereby reduces political action to proxy

³⁰⁸ Herscher, *Guide*, 83.

³⁰⁹ Herscher, *Guide*, 12-13.

³¹⁰ Herscher, *Guide*, 13.

action performed by elected representatives. To repeat the criticism of Herscher levied in the first chapter, it is this activist and critical disposition to the city that brings about most of the unreal estate development discussed by Herscher. Though some of the unreal estate happenings, he argues, are occasioned by activist forces, this is not necessarily so. It is clear, though, that by asserting a 'right' to the city, and by mobilizing those aspects of urban life neglected or relinquished by formal city politics, the projects discussed by Herscher under the heading of 'unreal estate' constitute a critical sphere of culture that asserts itself in terms of activist practice. In some cases, formal city political systems are confronted by the insufficiency of, or oppression brought about by city systems. In others, neglected city spaces are mobilized as rally points for overtly activist and political ends. In any case, it is clear that the cultural life of the city dweller in the context of deindustrialization is not a space separate from the sphere of politics, but rather it is imbued explicitly with critical and political force through forms of performed and embodied activism.

It is important to grant, however, that not all 'unreal estate' happenings are inherently political. Some 'unreal estate' happenings merely rest upon the absurdity and wastefulness of an economic system that has been deemed "...unreal from the perspective of the market economy."³¹¹ In fact, from a certain perspective, the unreality of 'unreal estate' may simply express the disquieting 'unvalue' of a parcel of physical space in the context of the global economy. Examined in this manner, a vacant lot that is not mobilized but merely conspicuous could count as unreal in the manner described by Herscher. The

³¹¹ Herscher, *Guide*, 9.

analysis and focus of the *Guide*, however, emphasizes the exceptional and mobilized. Herscher, offers an example of mobilized, exceptional, yet apolitical unreality, when he discusses the Michigan Building Parking Garage. This is a parking garage constructed within the façade of “...the ‘French Renaissance’ style Michigan Theatre.”³¹²

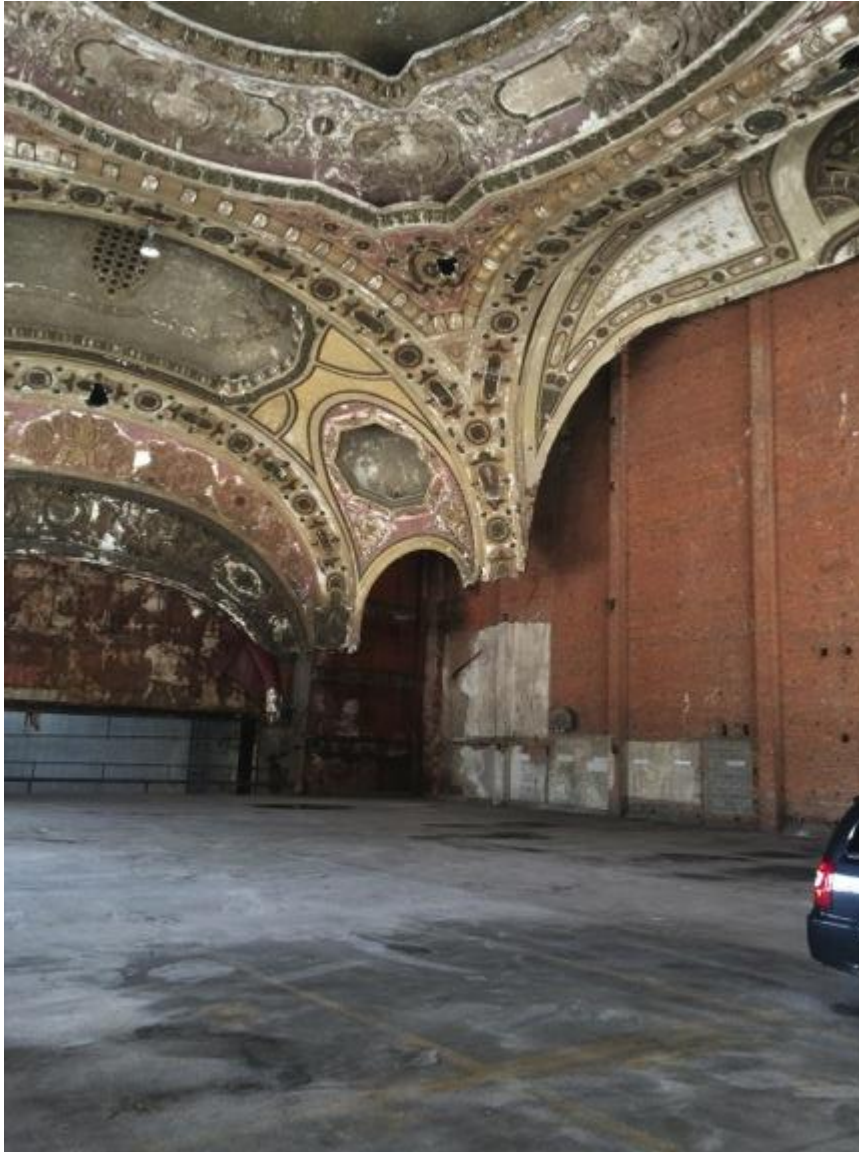


Figure 3.3 *Michigan Theatre Parking Garage*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

³¹² Herscher, *Guide*, 224.

This was an act of “...*accidental preservation*...”³¹³ since, as Herscher notes, it “...emerged not because the theater was valued as a work of architecture or historic monument, but precisely because it was *not* valued as such.”³¹⁴

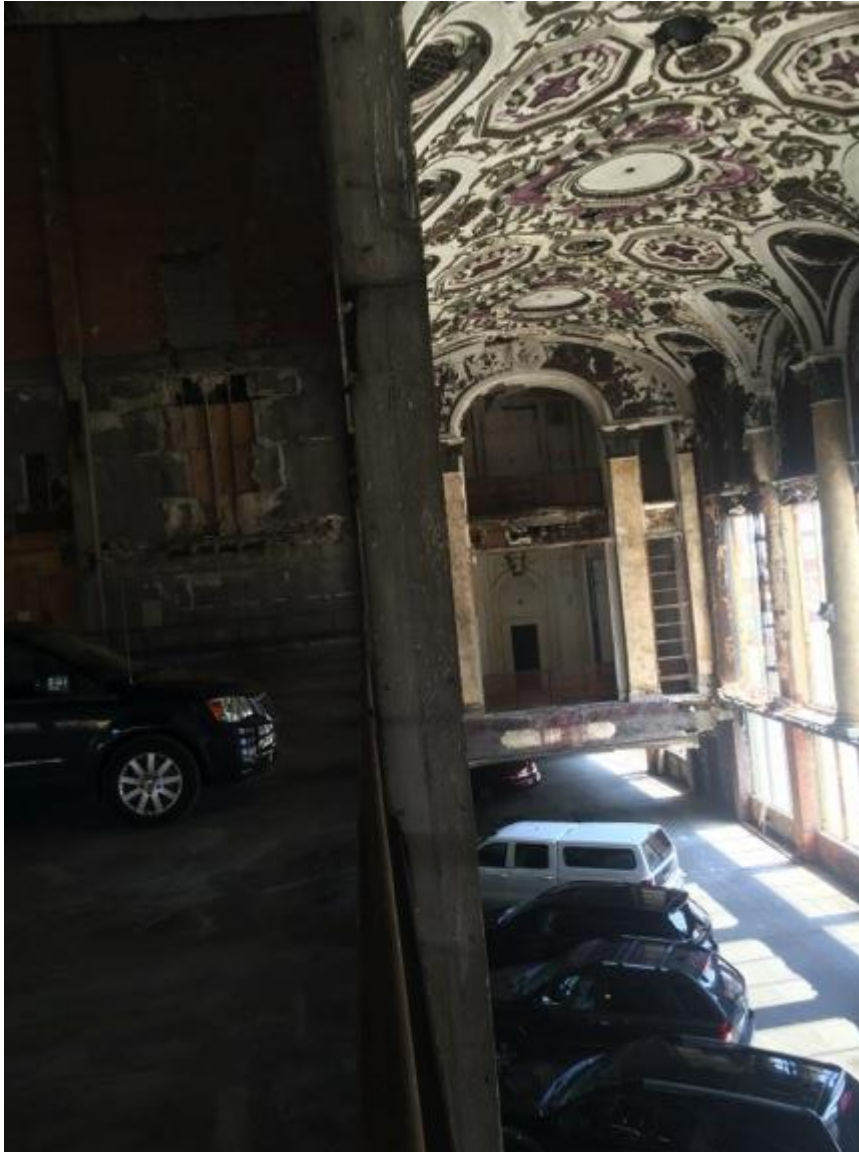


Figure 3.4 *Michigan Theatre Parking Garage 1*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

This inadvertent transformation of the theatre into a parking garage, a happening that only occurred because the demolition of the existing structure would have

³¹³ Herscher, *Guide*, 225.

³¹⁴ Herscher, *Guide*, 225.

caused structural difficulties for the adjacent buildings, would seem to support Herscher's claim that the unreality of 'unreal estate' is not necessarily political or activist.



Figure 3.5 *Michigan Theatre Parking Garage 2*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

While this site may have "...enormous aesthetic effect and historical resonance..."³¹⁵, its appearance does not resonate with the activist forces that

³¹⁵ Herscher, *Guide*, 225.

generally assert themselves in the context of the unreality of 'unreal estate'. It is out of place to read the re-development of a theatre into a parking garage as critical or activist, but nonetheless this 'adaptive reuse' is symbolically powerful. Herron encapsulates the symbolism of this accidental advent of redevelopment as follows:

...the improvisation of the Michigan Theater is powerful because it doesn't remove people from the city; on the contrary, it involves them dramatically in the production of their own situation. The ruin of urban space becomes a participatory drama: memory versus forgetting, the city dead or the city alive. The trick is seeing both at once, and comprehending them as equally true and mutually implicated.³¹⁶

This happening is symbolically powerful since the building inadvertently elucidates the colonization of cultural space by the automobile, albeit accidentally rather than as a form of active assertion. Participatory drama and mutual implication aside, this accidental and apolitical happening of unreal estate is, however, the exception to the general rule highlighted by the *Guide*.

As a rule the happenings Herscher introduces as examples of 'unreal estate' in Detroit mobilize a chasm of 'unvalue' (which he discusses in terms of the dominant economic modes of valuing) in order to bring about new values and meaning-contexts. Neglect, failure, and abandonment become critical allies for the happenings discussed by Herscher. That the conditions that allow these happenings to spring forth - pain, hunger, failure, material lack, abandonment, disuse, neglect, etc. are all deplorable conditions of urban life. By asserting a right to the city and by assuming the responsibilities of the failing city systems (as Herscher argues occurs with municipal therapy), artist collectives and community organizations implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) dispose themselves to the

³¹⁶ Herron, "The Forgetting Machine" Accessed April 21, 2016.

failed city systems in a way that is fundamentally critical. Unreal estate is itself not necessarily critical or activist, but its unreality is frequently mobilized in critical or activist ways. This ‘chasm of unvalue’ is frequently (but not in all cases) deployed productively as contested cultural space that provides the literal ground within the city structures to address the values that devalue this space. This also helps to explain part of the allure of ruin porn, insofar as the ruins themselves can stand as an indictment of the wasteful system of value that begets their disuse and disrepair while, as addressed in the first chapter, enticing the viewer to imagine new ways of life that can fill these faces. Unreal estate is not itself activist, but entices, invites, and frequently begets activist practice.

Detroit Demolition Disneyland, for example, was a response to 2005 municipal efforts to ‘beautify’ the city in preparation for the Super Bowl by demolishing abandoned houses. Centered on devalued space and contesting the unvalued structures in question, anonymous artists and activists took it upon themselves to paint a series of abandoned houses in bright “Tiggerific”³¹⁷ orange. Herscher, in his account of this artist action, summarizes the rationale for this action sent as a communiqué to *The Detroit*:

...the group wrote that it simply endeavored to appropriate houses “whose most striking feature are their derelict appearance” and foreground them by painting them Tiggerific [sic.] Orange, “a color from the Mickey Mouse series, easily purchased from Home Depot.

In its communiqué, the group claimed that, through painting these houses, it invited Detroit’s citizens to “look not only at these houses, but all the buildings rooted in decay and corrosion.” This scrutiny, claimed the group, brought “awareness.”³¹⁸

While Herscher describes this artist action as one that shows “...the limits of art, able to rhetorically critique an urban disaster without proposing alternatives

³¹⁷ A reference to the colour scheme employed by the Detroit Tigers baseball franchise.

³¹⁸ Herscher, *Guide*, 26.

to it..."³¹⁹ it is certain that the awareness that this project hoped to raise bears the weight of criticism. This anonymous artist action cast light on an aspect of the city that the municipal government hoped to conceal through its demolition efforts. Far from rhetorical, this artist/activist action confronted the efforts of Detroit's authorities to obfuscate the material effects of an economic system that has decimated neighbourhoods. The action demands that the city face the problem of abandonment and blight rather than turning away evasively.

"Detroit Demolition Disneyland" should be taken alongside the efforts of the Motor City Blight Busters, "...a non-profit organization in Northwest Detroit dedicated to 'stabilizing and revitalizing neighbourhoods.'"³²⁰ There are effectively three aspects to the Blight Busters mission. First, working with the city's demolition program, Blight Busters volunteers assist in taking down abandoned buildings. Second, the volunteer labour dedicates its efforts to securing abandoned homes engaging along with artists in beautification projects, by the application of painted butterflies to the sides of abandoned buildings as "...a means to symbolically occupy those buildings..."³²¹ It would be a simple matter to extend this notion of symbolic occupation to those buildings painted 'Tiggerific' Orange by the anonymous artists of Demolition Disneyland. Third, Blight Busters volunteers renovate existing abandoned homes and build new homes in an effort to stabilize and revitalize their neighbourhood. In a city at one third occupancy and in such a massive state of dysfunction and disrepair, occupation itself becomes a critical act. These projects and artist actions force

³¹⁹ Herscher, *Guide*, 26.

³²⁰ Herscher, *Guide*, 66.

³²¹ Herscher, *Guide*, 67.

both residents and visitors to recognize Detroit as a product of our values and practices. It should be obvious how this is the case. Historically in Detroit, economic and political forces have actively encouraged the migration of residents from formerly functional city neighbourhoods to suburban developments, thus decimating the city neighbourhoods in question.



Figure 3.6 *Graffiti Gallery at Motor City Java House, Blight Busters Home Base. Detroit, MI. June 18, 2014. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.*

Both the actions of the Motor City Blight Busters and those anonymously enacted by “Detroit Demolition Disneyland” simultaneously call attention to these seemingly abandoned and derelict neighbourhoods while demonstrating that there are inhabitants actively engaged with the trials of making a life for themselves and their families in this context. While city efforts attempt to “beautify” this struggle thus obfuscating a context of struggle, both symbolic occupation and

active and conspicuous efforts to stabilize neighbourhoods dispose themselves as a potent form of criticism of and resistance to dominant municipal and economic practices.

Recall this passage from Herron's *AfterCulture: Detroit and the Humiliation of History*. Herron argues that the recognition of Detroit as *our* city operates like "...discovering a family photo at some stranger's yard sale."³²² Herron continues:

The recognition, however, is not entirely happy, any more than the discovery of the photo would be: it raises the suspicion that if Detroit really *were* a city - like other cities - then the things that have happened in it, and to it, might happen anywhere. And given what has gone on here, especially in terms of media coverage, the wish to have Detroit *not* be representative is powerful; this accounts for the tentative, and perhaps cautionary observation that the place only *looks* like a city. Despite appearances, it really isn't one, at least not any longer. Detroit has to be deprived of its reality so that everybody else can feel better about theirs.³²³

In the first chapter we hinted that the account offered by Herron in this passage, of the perpetual 'othering' of Detroit, (which has the whiff of a desperate culturally necessary form of denial) invites critique, a critique proper to the particular topological and cultural landscape of the region. The crisis facing the related deindustrializing cities - Windsor and Detroit – brings about a specific moment of cultural weakness related to the specific failures and shortcomings of urban systems, institutions, and value presuppositions. Herron aptly describes a strong cultural will to evasively turn away from the obvious implications of the structural and institutional weaknesses. Yet, at the same time, activist groups within the region mobilize the cultural potencies as well as the capacities of disused or 'unreal' landscape present at this moment of transition in order to levy performed and sustained criticisms that not only negate, but propose new urban forms.

³²² Herron, *AfterCulture*, 14.

³²³ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 14-15.

3.2 Immanent Critique

It might seem that transitional (deindustrializing) cities like Detroit, in a state of unreality (to use Herscher's term) present themselves as excellent objects for immanent critique, the core critical movement of Frankfurt Critical Theory. The first movement of immanent critique is to present the abject state of contradiction between the stated values of a culture (e.g., economic opportunity, political equity, equality in the face of the law, etc.) and actual cultural practice.



Figure 3.7 'Welcome to Detroit' at Alter Road. Detroit, MI. August 23, 2013. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

In Detroit we find that the dividing line between city and suburb (specifically Alter Road) is, as described by Kenneth T. Jackson in his *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of United States* "... [t]he most conspicuous city-suburban

contrast in the United States..."³²⁴ Alter Road, frequently referred to as 'the great wall of Detroit', is the dividing line between Detroit and its immediate suburb of Grosse Pointe. Statistically Detroit and Grosse Pointe are mirror opposites when examined in terms of ethnicity, class, access to education and generally the opportunities that cultural imagination identifies as the project of The United States as it presents itself to itself.



Figure 3.8 *Grosse Pointe, Two Blocks From Alter Road.* Grosse Pointe, MI. August 23, 2013. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

Standing on Alter Road it is hardly necessary to illustrate the disparity in access to economic opportunity, police services, education, etc. with statistics since the transition from Detroit to Grosse Pointe being so striking. Alter Road acts as a

³²⁴ Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of United States*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 278.

metaphorical (and at some points, literal) wall accentuating the abject state of contradiction between the stated values of a culture and actual cultural practice.



Figure 3.9 *Detroit, Two Blocks from Alter Road.* Detroit, MI. August 23, 2013. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

It is, however, not sufficient to issue a rational judgment upon the glaring contradictions between values and practice, effectively dwelling in a moment of negation, as do the Frankfurt critical theorists. While Frankfurt critical theory has a strong capacity to deliver the negative moment of critique, the projective capacities of Nietzsche's position (involving affirmation, experimentation, and embodied praxis) are vital to an analysis of the potent forms of activist critique and prescription at work in community movements in Windsor and Detroit.

To provide a deeper understanding of immanent critique, and ultimately to isolate the respects in which it falls short, we must first engage the problem of instrumental rationality, along with Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno. Generally, Horkheimer and Adorno were attempting to understand how modern, democratic, and rationalized Germany could, in WWII, become a massive industrial killing machine. How did such a highly rationalized and technological society become a bureaucratic machine for producing such human misery and death?

Instrumental reason directs itself to ends that are, more or less, taken for granted. The outcome is that this form of rationality produces a series of actions directed toward goals and yet it has no means to critically evaluate these end goals. Instrumental reason directs itself toward the adequacy of procedures for attaining ends while attaching little importance and fewer critical means to evaluate the question whether the purposes as such are reasonable.³²⁵ We should note that, for Horkheimer and Adorno, it is the primacy of this form of rationality and not this form of rationality itself which poses a problem.

Charles Taylor, in his 1991 Massey Lecture, identifies instrumental reason (along with individualism and soft despotism) as one of the central malaises of modernity. He describes instrumental reason as "...the kind of rationality we draw on when we calculate the most economical application of means to a given end."³²⁶ This form of reckoning, he notes, frequently runs against personal sensibilities, for instance, when "a bureaucrat, in spite of his personal insight,

³²⁵ Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 3.

³²⁶ Charles Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, (Concord: House of Anansi Press Limited, 1991), 5.

may be forced by the rules under which he operates to make a decision he knows to be against humanity and good sense.”³²⁷ The solution, it might seem, would be to apply greater weight to ‘good sense’ or ‘humanity’ in the face of this dilemma. Problematically, however, this sort of means-ends consideration is not merely embedded within systems that we utilize or inhabit. With the primacy of instrumental reason, there is a significant human push insofar as the bureaucratic structures and large institutions required by a technological society make it necessary to reason in this way for the sake of our material and economic survival. Stressing the historical cultural shift in outlook necessary to bring about the institutional structures that begat the industrial revolution, Taylor argues that resistance is possible.

To turn briefly to three examples of instrumental reason that illustrate the line of argument emerging from Taylor and Frankfurt Critical Theory, we will begin with the general line of argument taken up by Broken City Lab (BCL). In a 2010 class visit to my course on Philosophy and Popular Culture (Thinking Cities) at the University of Windsor, Justin Langois (Senior Research Fellow, BCL) argued that the official modes of representation deployed by the City of Windsor are fundamentally functionalist and de-spiriting. Being an industrial town, the city streets are lined by brutal and functionalist chain link, industrial lighting and power cables which tend to be the dominant aesthetic feature when entering the city. Windsor tends to downplay its most interesting geographical, architectural, and aesthetic features. A 2009 blog post from BCL notes the text of a promotional sign by Windsor’s airport for “Windsor’s Famous Sculpture Garden

³²⁷ Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 7.

on the Detroit River” ostensibly meant to attract visitors arriving by plane.

Prominently the sign emphasizes what it takes to be the main selling point of this city jewel: “It’s Free” rather than something like ‘it’s stunning’, which would serve to emphasize the aesthetic value of these works of public art.



Figure 3.10 Windsor Signage. Windsor, ON. May 25, 2009. Broken City Lab. Photo Credit: Steven Leyden Cochrane. <http://www.brokencitylab.org/blog/windsor-signage/>.

In the blog post, Langois reflects:

I *almost* didn't believe this sign existed. The few times I've been out to the Windsor Airport, I've usually been coming from the south, which (if my understanding of the geographic location of this photo is correct) might explain why I've missed it in the past. ...it actually collapses two things that I often loosely discuss in introducing Windsor's cultural landscape (so to speak) to people who aren't from the area. The level of design (demonstrated above) and this kind of amassing of public art in the form of a dumping ground, ghetto, "tax-shelter," park while the rest of the streets remain the place for bland infrastructure and advertising is a prime example of what may be wrong in Windsor.³²⁸

The city is so mired in its economic valuations that stress efficiency, utility, and frugality that, when city administrators begrudgingly engage in aesthetically dominated projects, when presenting them to visitors, it cannot recognize the

³²⁸ Broken City Lab, "Broken City Lab Windsor Signage," May 25, 2009, Accessed April 21, 2016. <http://www.brokencitylab.org/blog/windsor-signage/>.

aesthetic or cultural values that these projects rest upon. Beautification, shared cultural space, or more generally, the health, vitality, and well-being of Windsorites only appears as a tertiary consideration of city planners who prioritize primarily the economic well-being of major industry or, secondarily, the economic potential of the tourist industry. The only way an argument about the value of art or shared cultural space, can have any impact upon the sensibilities of city planners in Windsor is to justify itself upon the basis of the economic bottom line. This sentiment has also impacted the sensibilities of Windsorites generally, who view any aesthetic considerations in city planning to be a waste of taxpayer dollars, thereby reinforcing the argument made by Taylor about the force of instrumental reason, namely that "...powerful mechanisms of social life press us in this direction."³²⁹

Attempts to analyze the urban gardening movement within Detroit³³⁰ proffered both by its boosters and critics tend to focus on economic feasibility studies thereby reducing the considered value of urban agriculture to merely instrumental assessments. Prescriptions for these community organizations tend to argue the need for these organizations to broaden their economic footprint in terms of both sales and production. Generally, this sort of analysis treats the urban gardening movement as a primarily economic movement, thus failing to sufficiently acknowledge the explicit and substantive attempt to experimentally overcome the theory of value presented by the global economy itself. Urban gardening in Detroit must be read in the context of a city which has been mostly

³²⁹ Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 7.

³³⁰ Note that the urban gardening movement arose briefly earlier in our discussion. See section 1.3 (pp. 76-77) below.

abandoned by the major corporate entities such as the large chain grocery stores that long ago forced out the local independent grocers. In a city with notoriously undependable public transportation, extremely high levels of poverty, high unemployment, and a spread out urban layout designed for roughly three times the current population level, the scarcity of grocery stores has left many stranded with party stores and gas stations as their only readily available grocery shopping options. Many residents feel more generally abandoned by a city no longer able to provide basic services and by industry no longer present to provide employment. Thus, they have turned to community oriented modes of self-reliance to satisfy these basic needs. Community gardens specifically have been very successful within this context. The gardens provide some food; they stabilize and beautify neighborhoods through mutual cooperation; they provide rally points for political discussions and movements; they establish intergenerational dialogue and education; and they give residents meaningful tasks that establish a sense of agency otherwise lacking.

These community gardening projects face a number of problems, but experimentally address them as they arise with a mostly 'learn by doing' methodology. In many ways the food produced is only a pretext for social experimentation in non-corporate community cooperation. While there have been moves to corporatize urban gardening in Detroit (e.g., Hantz Farms³³¹), many urban gardeners resist this move, like Patrick Crouch (manager of the non-

³³¹ Hantz Farms was a controversial corporate attempt to engage in urban agriculture, widely accepted by the city of Detroit and widely opposed by community urban agriculturalists.

profit Earthworks Urban Farm, Detroit) calling it a form of "...community annihilation and not community development."³³²



Figure 3.11 *Hantz Farms Building.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

The gardeners themselves are often berated for their small thinking, social ideals and distrust of big business. Given the context of the emergence of urban gardening in Detroit, such distrust and resistance seems understandable if not warranted. Specifically within Detroit, as was earlier noted, the urban agriculture movement arose in response to community abandonment by corporate entities.

³³² Bill McGraw, "Farming takes Root in Detroit: Hopes Spreads Along with the Compost," *Detroit Free Press*, May 4, 2009, Accessed April 21, 2016.

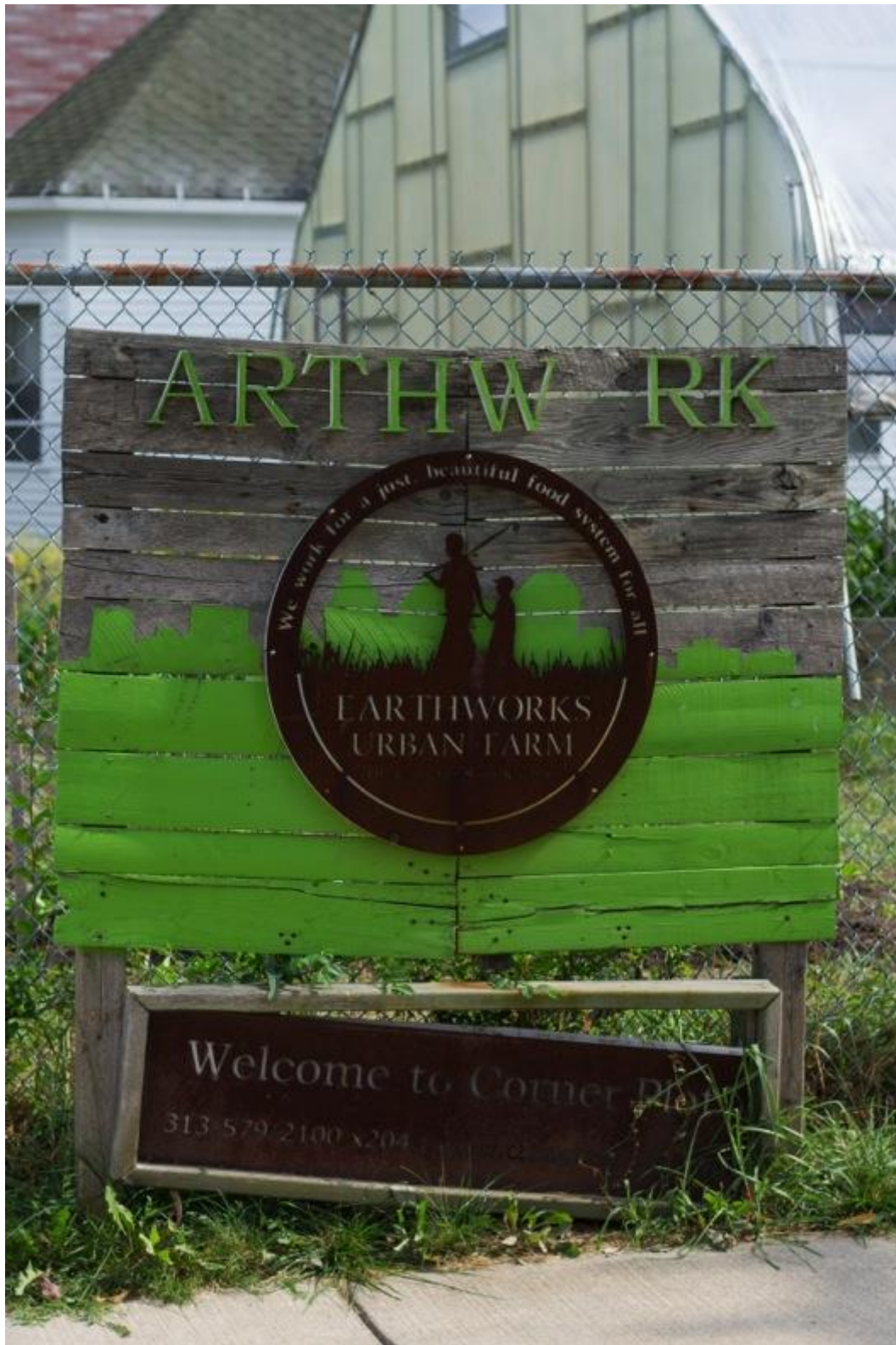


Figure 3.11 *Earthworks Urban Farm Sign*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

The reason the movement has such grass roots purchase within Detroit is specifically because the movement sets as its tasks the establishment of self-reliance and food sovereignty, and it frames itself as a critical urban response to the consumerist corporate disposition generally.



Figure 3.12 'Free Food,' Ford City Community Garden. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

To decry the social ideals and distrust of big business within the Detroit urban agriculture movement is to instrumentalize and specifically neglect the activist and anti-corporate roots of this movement. These urban agriculturalists exist within city systems and systems of economic exchange, while actively seeking to subvert them by projecting cooperative and anti-institutional values mobilized towards sustenance activities. Detroit urban agriculture is an *insurgent* movement.

In terms of the media representation of urban gardening, the analysis offered in *Reimagining Detroit, Opportunities for Redefining an American City*, by John Gallagher, is fairly representative of the general leanings of coverage. Gallagher devotes a full chapter to urban gardening which he entitles disparagingly: "Potential and Problems in Urban Agriculture."



Figure 3.13 *Tire Planter, Brightmoor Farmway. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.*

While his treatment of this cultural movement delineates a series of other values emergent from establishing sustainable modes of producing food locally, his analysis is focused heavily on the practical problems with the economics of urban gardening in Detroit as well as his own inept attempts to engage with this movement (his characterization). The following passage illustrates of his latent judgments:

A business is an activity that brings in enough revenue to attract investors and entrepreneurs, one that will pay its workers a living wage adequate to support them and their families. How much revenue does a good business have to bring in? The median household income in the United States is about \$45000. If a farm running as a business wanted to employ ten workers at that level of income - marketers and accountants and machine operators and truck drivers - it would have to generate about a half-million dollars a year in revenue just to pay these workers. Not to mention the additional cost of field hands and tractors and delivery trucks and legal help and insurance policies and everything else a farm business requires.³³³

The analysis offered by Gallagher is fairly representative of the sorts of values that underscore such feasibility studies of urban agriculture. The central questions posed to urban gardeners corroborate this: What quantity of food are you able to produce? How much can you sell it for? Can you produce for your farmers a monetary compensation equal to the median household income in the United States? In general, what is the economic bottom line? Some lip service is paid to the sense of engagement with one's community, with nature, building a sense of agency, and the pedagogical value of engaging experimentally with one's city in order to think through alternative modes of urban life. Regardless, the bottom line drawn by many theorists and most media pundits remains economic feasibility. These media treatments of urban gardening in Detroit are generally dismissive of the general tension between economic and community values at work in this movement.

In order to draw the contrast between Gallagher's analysis and that proffered by activists engaged with these practices, consider the following excerpt concerning urban agriculture from *The Next American Revolution* by Grace Lee Boggs:

³³³ John Gallagher, *Reimagining Detroit, Opportunities for Redefining an American City*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 63.

This movement is very clear about the tangible benefits of urban agriculture: it provides fresh nutritious food, beautifies neighborhoods, creates neighborhood social capital, advances neighborhood economic development, stabilizes communities, and provides sustainability. But it also provides concrete examples of alternative value-oriented means of securing our livelihoods. In this regard, the urban agricultural movement in Detroit has arisen within the broader context of the emergence of the national environmental justice movement.³³⁴

In conversation with Steve Green, a colleague, friend, director of the Windsor Essex County Community Gardening Network, and operations manager of the Downtown Windsor Farmers Market, I suggested that one of the least interesting aspects of urban gardens is the actual food produced.



Figure 3.14 'Windsor Essex County Community Gardening Network,' Ford City Community Garden. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Rather, I argued in conversation, urban agricultural practice 'grows souls' (to use Boggs' terms), or engages gardeners in counter-cultural practice that can bring about critical yet also life affirming affective dispositions as performed and

³³⁴ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 125-126.

embodied forms of resistance to dominant cultural values. While I was expecting Green to dispute this and argue that the technical and productive elements of the gardens were of primary importance, he did not. Instead, Green (echoing Hardt and Negri) agreed with my assessment, adding only that what we are doing is building networks of mutual support and politically engaged communities.



Figure 3.15 'Bee Yard,' Georgia Street Community Garden. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

In this sense, urban gardens become the front lines for the biopolitical struggle against corporate forces, trenches of sorts where the multitude produces new forms of the common. Not all urban gardens and urban agriculturalists dispose themselves in this manner of course.



Figure 3.16 *Campus Community Garden, University of Windsor. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.*

Nonetheless, many of the urban agriculturalists who form the urban farming movement in Windsor and Detroit use specifically revolutionary terms to describe their practice. In their *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century*, Boggs and Boggs describe what is involved in a true revolution in terms of a mode of thought as well as practice:

Revolutionary thinking begins with a series of illuminations. It is not just plodding along according to a list of axioms. Nor is it leaping from peak to peak. Revolutionary thinking has as its purpose to discover where man/woman should be tomorrow so that we can

struggle systematically and programmatically to arouse the great masses of the people to want to go there.³³⁵

The goal of the activists and revolutionaries is not the material production that economic analysis treats as the bottom line. Rather, these sorts of activities aim to produce through practice new forms of thought and fundamental shifts in standards of value themselves. This sort of revolution, Boggs argues, must operate on a small scale and take root in the souls or spirit of those involved in building a new future.



Figure 3.17 *Greenhouse, Boggs Educational Center. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.*

In a sense, the systems against which Boggs sees her movement working take the form of the 'habitual and undiscussable principles' (to paraphrase Nietzsche); presuppositions we inherit from our culture that constitute the basic makeup of

³³⁵ Boggs and Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution*, 19-20.

our character. In terms introduced in the preceding chapter along with Nietzsche, this is the voice of reflective consciousness. Recall that reflective autonomy for Nietzsche pertains to consciousness understood as the net that binds one person to another rather than to the autonomous individual. Boggs and Boggs describe the sort of practical experimentation involved in revolutionary change as follows:

Man/womankind today needs to redefine what are appropriate social relations. This can't be done by a plebiscite, by counting noses, or by any other kind of numbers game. It must be done by particular kinds of people projecting another way to live and testing against certain classes, certain races, certain groups, certain people.³³⁶

To make revolutionary change possible, Boggs and Boggs argue in a manner consistent with what we observed with Nietzsche, that experimentation must start at the most basic and local levels. Moving away from her readings of Marx and post-Marxist theory, Boggs is less interested in abstracted and generalized treatments of class struggle, focusing instead upon the particular, context-rooted, and protracted movements that constitute ongoing struggle. The experimentation at work within the urban gardening movement in Detroit works as a collaborative research moment where new values distinct from those at work in the global economic system can emerge organically through cooperation and attentiveness to nature.

The sorts of value emergent from urban agriculture do not fit neatly on a balance sheet or in a feasibility study. They are, however, more fundamental to urban agriculture than crop outputs or revenues from the sale of produce in locales such as Eastern Market or the Wayne State University campus market.

³³⁶ Boggs and Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution*, 20.

This assessment of urban agriculture shows that visible products are merely the final output, perhaps even a by-product of a process of social experimentation.



Figure 3.18 *Bruce Park Community Garden*. Windsor, ON. August 15, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

This experimentation is meant to effect a fundamental change in our character, or in terms used by Grace Boggs, "Grow Our Souls".³³⁷ When media pundits and theorists frame urban gardening in economic terms the only forms of cultivation

³³⁷ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 28.

that they are able to capture with their analysis are those that fit into the balance sheet, thereby reductively overlooking what Boggs refers to as cultivation of the soul. The values at work in these modes of analysis tend to reinforce and impose themselves as judgments, since they are, after all, modes of analyses designed to measure monetary and economic value. Not surprisingly, these analyses assert that critical dispositions to systems of economic value are economically problematic. Framing this movement in these terms (again) instrumentalizes the movement and effectively ‘loosens the bow’ (BGE “Preface”), thus denying the dangerous and productive elements of the genuine opposition of values at work in urban gardening in Detroit. If we read this movement as a re-imagining and revaluation of our urban landscape which is critically disposed to economic benchmarks (like Boggs does and Nietzsche would), we will be able to regard criticism as criticism, thus maintaining the productive elements at work in this context.

One final example that illustrates aptly these instrumental structures of reason applied bureaucratically is the ongoing struggle for the use of public space faced by Windsor’s Downtown Farmer’s Market. The market runs every Saturday for 22 weeks from spring to fall in Charles Clark Square in downtown Windsor and has become immensely successful, bringing in roughly 1000 visitors each day it runs. Charles Clark Square is the downtown municipal skating rink in the winter, while sitting mostly unused through the summer months.³³⁸ In 2013

³³⁸ Broken City Lab has brainstormed about this space in an attempt to imagine ways “...to make the space more useful to general activity year-round.” See: Broken City Lab, “Broken City Lab Blog,” September 29, 2008, Accessed April 25, 2016. <http://www.brokencitylab.org/blog/bcl-report-sept-29-2008/>.

and 2014 the City of Windsor waved rental fees for the market's use of this space in order to "...help the event adjust to a new location and to give organizers time to apply for grants."³³⁹ In 2015, however, the city demanded "...full payment of fees for the 2015 season — totalling \$22,286."³⁴⁰ These additional costs would have halted successful operations of the market in 2015. This market serves as a much needed activation of the downtown corridor (which sits mostly unused through the daytime hours), a small business incubator that has launched a number of brick and mortar entrepreneurial endeavors, and an open community space that supports artistic experimentation and discussion of municipal politics. The justification for demanding these exorbitant fees (considering the normal status of disuse of this space) offered by Councillors is as follows:

"Whether we like it or not, there's a policy".³⁴¹

"...giving the market more exceptions would open a "Pandora's Box" of other organizers seeking similar arrangements."³⁴²

"[Council] ... has an obligation to follow policy and be fiscally responsible."³⁴³

A donation from Rose City Ford saved the market's 2015 run³⁴⁴, although the principal modes of value estimation employed by the city remain unaddressed. Private donations do not address what many residents consider to be blind adherence to policies that run counter to the values that community projects like the DWFM instantiate. The blind application of policy on the part of city officials

³³⁹ Dalson Chen, "City fees put future of Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market in doubt," *Windsor Star*, April 8, 2015, Accessed April 25, 2016. <http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/city-fees-put-future-of-downtown-windsor-farmers-market-in-doubt>.

³⁴⁰ Chen, "City fees put future of Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market in doubt."

³⁴¹ Chen, "City fees put future of Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market in doubt."

³⁴² Chen, "City fees put future of Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market in doubt."

³⁴³ Chen, "City fees put future of Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market in doubt."

³⁴⁴ Liz Thorne, "Downtown Farmers' Market Saved," *WindsoriteDOTca News*, May 1, 2015, Accessed April 25, 2016. <http://windsorite.ca/2015/05/downtown-windsor-farmers-market-saved/>.

fails to address the value of this market, value that does not fit neatly on a balance sheet.

The three examples above demonstrate that there exists a good deal of public and culturally rooted push-back against the reduction of all value consideration to the instrumental. Problematically, however, if Horkheimer, Adorno, and Taylor are correct in their assessment, we live in an age of the primacy of this instrumentalized form of rationality, although Taylor argues against the position that would assert "...we are utterly helpless in the face of such forces..."³⁴⁵ Horkheimer and Adorno themselves argue that philosophy is not immune from the effects of instrumental reason, nor does philosophy have at present a workable alternative to these dominant structures of reasoning and analysis. Horkheimer and Adorno note:

Philosophy knows of no workable abstract rules or goals to replace those at present in force. It is immune to the suggestion of the status quo for the very reason that it accepts bourgeois ideals without further consideration.³⁴⁶

Philosophy, they argue, "...is not the fundamental or master-science."³⁴⁷

However, philosophy does represent an attempt to resist the suggestion that the status quo in all of its powerful, suggestive, and oppressive force is the only alternative to chaos. Philosophy, however, does resist the classical and instrumental 'either or' argument presented by proponents of mainstream ideologies³⁴⁸ and attempts "...to hang on to intellectual and real freedom."³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ Taylor, *Malaise of Modernity*, 8.

³⁴⁶ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 243.

³⁴⁷ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 243.

³⁴⁸ See Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp.237-240.

³⁴⁹ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 243.

Acknowledging that they are far from immune to the forces of prevalent forms of rationality, Horkheimer and Adorno do not advocate revolution against these forces. Such a revolution would be fruitless, they argue, without a workable alternative to the present state of affairs. Instead they advocate a radical, yet cautious approach, an unrelenting critique of the structures of reason themselves from a perspective that simply argues that human suffering cannot be deemed either logically necessary or acceptable. The goal of this critique is simply to demand that reason pay heed to "...the interests of men."³⁵⁰ Further, Horkheimer states:

The idea that an aim can be reasonable for its own sake – on the basis of virtues that insight reveals it to have in itself ...is utterly alien to subjective reason, even where it [subjective reason] rises above the consideration of immediate utilitarian values and devotes itself to reflections about the social order as a whole.³⁵¹

Certain aims (including those of critique) can, as Horkheimer argues, be reasonable for their own sake – thus giving a starting point for forms of substantive critique. In this manner, a simple proposition of this nature could provide the basis for a critique of reason itself. To articulate this position that opposes instrumental reason, Horkheimer and Adorno, in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, state:

All work and pleasure are protected by the hangman. To contradict this fact is to deny all science and logic. It is impossible to abolish the terror and retain civilization. Even a lessening of terror implies a beginning of the process of dissolution. Various conclusions can be drawn from this – from the groveling respect for Fascist barbarity to refuge in the circles of Hell. But there is another conclusion: to laugh at logic if it runs counter to the interests of men.³⁵²

³⁵⁰ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 218.

³⁵¹ Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason*, 4.

³⁵² Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 217-218.

Douglas Kellner in his *Critical Theory and the Crisis of Social Theory* argues that the project of critical theory attempts to offer a critique of reason that holds as its basis such a simple proposition, *that human suffering is unacceptable*. He states:

In opposition to the subjectivism and relativism, often bordering on nihilism, advanced by some of these postmodernist perspectives, critical theory, by contrast, advances the conception of a critical and normative theory which is committed to emancipation from all forms of oppression, as well as to freedom, happiness, and a rational ordering of society.³⁵³

While their critique proceeds rationally, the simple set of propositions which represent the grounds upon which their critique is based appeal to ethical, rather than purely rational, standards. Though this is the case, their ethical critique of reason still proceeds by the very means which they hope to critique. This is the critical move which Habermas claims to be a performative contradiction. He states: "...this description of the self-destruction of the critical capacity is paradoxical, because in the moment of description it still has to make use of the critique that has been declared dead."³⁵⁴ In simpler terms, attempts to critically evaluate the loss of reason's critical potency must rely upon the very rational tools that have purportedly lost their critical potency. By Habermas' account of their position, they do not attempt to escape from the supposed paradox of the performative contradiction of a mode of critique which turns against its own foundations. Habermas claims that they, "...eschew theory and practice determinate negation on an ad hoc basis, thus standing firm against that fusion

³⁵³ Douglas Kellner, "Critical Theory and the Crisis of Social Theory," *Sociological Perspectives* 33.1, (1990) 12.

³⁵⁴ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1987) 119.

of reason and power that plugs all crevices...”³⁵⁵ However, taking up such a method of critically evaluating each instance of reason on a case by case basis, that is showing how, in each case, reason shows itself to be unreasonable, Habermas claims that Horkheimer and Adorno must make it “...at least minimally plausible that there is *no way out*.”³⁵⁶

Frankfurt critical theory is, actually, quite interdisciplinary, insisting upon (as Bronner notes) a “...new philosophical and practical project...”, a “...’supra-disciplinary approach which, in fusing philosophy with empirical social scientific research, would produce a new materialist enterprise guided by normative assumptions.”³⁵⁷ Critical theory, as spelled out by Horkheimer in his inaugural lecture, “...presupposed a concern with historically situating phenomena as well as an awareness of philosophy’s role in shaping the very society it seeks to describe.”³⁵⁸ Critical theory, then, is a situated methodology open to a myriad of perspectives. However, it would maintain “...a commitment to the autonomy of theory beyond its relation to any particular worldview...”³⁵⁹, thus cutting off access to affective interpretations. Theory is primary, at least as conceived by Horkheimer and Adorno, and serves to ground practice as “...a new materialist enterprise guided by normative assumptions.”³⁶⁰ Critical theory, then, becomes

³⁵⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 128.

³⁵⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 128.

³⁵⁷ Stephen Bronner, *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists*, (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), 82.

³⁵⁸ Bronner, *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists*, 82.

³⁵⁹ Bronner, *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists*, 82.

³⁶⁰ Bronner, *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists*, 82.

locked in a reflective and negative reserve that "...attacked domination, rather than describing explicit, determinant possibilities for new social formations."³⁶¹

The criticism of the Frankfurt project offered by Habermas to some extent lands. By the account of critical theory offered by Robert Antonio,

...immanent critique has two critical movements: one moving from ideology to social reality and the other in the obverse direction. The goal of the method is immanent truth which unifies what is, with the determinate possibilities for, what could be.³⁶²

By eschewing praxis in favour of an intellectual and reflective approach, Horkheimer and Adorno have effectively abandoned the experiential basis of traditional Marxist philosophy which calls for the dignity of labour on the grounds of a frustrated notion of agency resulting from alienation. Effectively the form of immanent critique called for by Horkheimer and Adorno is, as a result of this abandoned position, stalled at the conclusion of its first moment. The mode of critique offered by Horkheimer and Adorno is very effective at presenting a culture with the tension between its highest values and the real practices of the systems that embody these values.³⁶³ Unfortunately, without a foundation rooted in experience and the experimental exercise of power in the context of oppression and exploitation, this is where the critique stalls. While in words and writings Horkheimer and Adorno stress the historical, political, and dialectical nature of critique, in practice and by eschewing praxis they emphasize the hope for the saving power of an autonomous reason. The radical critique of reason, then, becomes the purview of those who sit still and think really, really hard.

³⁶¹ Robert Antonio, "Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory," *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (1981), 341.

³⁶² Antonio, "Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory," 338.

³⁶³ For example and in very general terms: You value liberty and enshrine the notion within your systems? Look at the practice of your systems. Your systems are oppressive and exploitive.

Antonio notes: "Critical theory has emphasized primarily the negative movement of the dialectic. It has attacked domination, rather than describing explicit, determinant possibilities for new social formations."³⁶⁴ Antonio ultimately argues of immanent critique that in order to retain its vitality, critical theorists must become practitioners who translate "...the critique of domination into historically concrete and regionally specific immanent critiques of bureaucratic domination."³⁶⁵ Effectively, by this account, critical theory must become activist practice. Antonio concludes his treatment of immanent critique as follows:

Emancipatory immanent critique should both portray the contradiction between state bureaucratic society and its democratic ideals (about rationality and freedom) and point to the determinant possibilities for overcoming the contradiction. The critique is not an idealist reduction because it aims to become a basis, not a substitute, for praxis.³⁶⁶

We should note that this is structurally the same criticism levied against Richardson's account of the possibility of self-criticism in the second chapter of this work. Richardson, in his structuring of three historically conditioned capacities for freedom, stresses our reflective capacities while neglecting the potency of active experimentation in a manner wholly inappropriate given the critical project present in the works of Nietzsche. By the account advanced by Richardson, we are given no means to reach beyond ourselves or to engage with the trials or contrivances of life. As we noted, Richardson's introduction of self-genealogy is merely critical, turning reflective consciousness back upon itself in order to reveal the manners in which reflective consciousness disfigures the drives through its conformity to the prescriptions of the morality of custom. Self-genealogy inhibits the inhibiting force – a sort of restraint put in place to curtail

³⁶⁴ Antonio, "Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory," 341.

³⁶⁵ Antonio, "Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory," 341.

³⁶⁶ Antonio, "Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory," 342.

reflective consciousness' mutilation of the drives – that fails to reach outside of the self in order to account for the creative energies necessary to bring about new values. Perhaps these resources can de-value values that are life negating, but they cannot account for any move that does not rest in mere criticism. Likewise, the radical critique of reason is quite a potent critical force insofar as it lays bare the structures of our domination, although it stalls when asked to formulate a proposal for how best to meet the challenges posed by such domination. Immanent critique aims "...to laugh at logic if it runs counter to the interests of men".³⁶⁷ However, the methodology employed by Horkheimer and Adorno bars the way to forms of experimental counter-practice - favoring rational radical critique (thinking really, really hard) - divorces itself from the biological basis of critique itself while cutting off many avenues for the production of new social forms and knowledges. Hardt and Negri would call this the "...new production of the common... [where] ..., people communicate their different knowledges, different capacities to form cooperatively something new."³⁶⁸

Effectively, the primacy of instrumental reason, by the analysis offered by Horkheimer and Adorno, closes off a host of perspectives about the world to us by presenting itself as the only valid mode of reckoning. Problematically though, so too would the cautious approach to the problem of the primacy of instrumental reason advocated by Horkheimer and Adorno: the radical critique of reason. This poses a problem in Nietzschean terms if we note again that:

Perspectival seeing is the *only* kind of seeing there is, perspectival 'knowing' is the *only* kind of 'knowing'; and the *more* eyes, different eyes through which we are able to view

³⁶⁷ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, , 217-218.

³⁶⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 254-5.

this same matter, the more complete our 'conception' of it, our 'objectivity', will be. But to eliminate the will completely, to suspend the feelings altogether, even assuming that we could do so: what? would this not amount to the *castration* of the intellect?... (GM III 12)

In Nietzschean terms, then, the primacy of instrumental reason represents a castration of the intellect. Since the racial critique proposed by Horkheimer and Adorno insists upon a form of rational quietism that eschews practice, Horkheimer and Adorno have cut themselves off from the epistemological avenues that the *insurgency* of activist and artistic practice can potentially open up through "...*diversity* of perspectives and affective interpretations in the interest of knowledge." (GM III 12)

The methodology of the critical theorists - immanent critique – is quite potent in its first movement as described by Antonio (to "...portray the contradiction between state bureaucratic society and its democratic ideals..."³⁶⁹). We see this part of their methodology in expression through the practices of many embedded Windsor and Detroit organizations and communities. However, this methodology stalls insofar as it is mired in a tradition that treats argument, like those deployed as critique, as products rather than acts. The simplest commonly held philosophical definition of the term 'argument' is: a series of premises or 'reasons' set out in either discourse or text, offered in support of a conclusion. At root, this understanding is dialectical and discursive insofar as it treats reasons as expressions of language. As Nietzsche forcefully notes, however, "Nothing is easier to dismiss than the effect a dialectician produces: the experience of any assembly where speeches are made is proof of that." (TI "The Problem of Socrates" 6) Nietzsche further notes:

³⁶⁹ Antonio, "Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory," 342.

The sculptor of language was not so modest as to believe that he was only giving things designations, he conceived rather that with words he was expressing supreme knowledge of things; language is, in fact, the first stage of the occupation with science. Here, too, it is the *belief that the truth has been found out* of which the mightiest sources of energy have flowed. A great deal later – only now – it dawns on men that in their belief in language they have propagated a tremendous error. (HH I 11)

By Nietzsche's argument, language falsifies. As Richardson, in "Nietzsche, Language, Community," notes: "Language, due to deep structural features, conceals or distorts the true character of the world."³⁷⁰

Horkheimer, Adorno, Taylor, and generally Frankfurt critical theory potently and effectively define and explicate the sources of many of the problems faced by community movements with feet on the ground by isolating the structures of a means-ends calculating instrumental rationality that blocks the expressive capacities of the common. Critical theory also has a strong capacity for issuing the first (negative) moment of immanent critique. Problematically, however, by eschewing practice and dismissing the capacities of activist experimentation, the critical theorists improperly position themselves as a paternalistic intelligentsia taking up a 'fish bowl' perspective. They decry the disempowerment of the dispossessed at the hands of a totalizing yet facile form of rationality while further disempowering the dispossessed by insisting that only isolated academic intellectual resistance can have any purchase in light of totalizing and facile reason. David Bowie, in his hit "Changes", offers an apt reflection in response:

And these children that you spit on
As they try to change their worlds
Are immune to your consultations
They're quite aware of what they're going through³⁷¹

³⁷⁰ Richardson, "Nietzsche, Language, Community", 221.

³⁷¹ David Bowie, *Hunky Dory*, "Changes", December 1971.

This is not only disrespectful to those engaged in struggle, this position held by most critical theorists effectively (in Nietzschean terms) castrates reason, cutting off a host of perspectives and denying the epistemological and practical purchase of artistic and activist experimentation.

3.3 Experimentation

Perhaps premature. – At the present time it seems that, under all kinds of false, misleading names and mostly amid great uncertainty, those who do not regard themselves as being bound by existing laws and customs are making the first attempts to organise themselves and therewith to create for themselves a *right*. while hitherto they had lived, corrupt and corrupting, denounced as criminals, free-thinkers, immoral persons, and villains, and under the ban of outlawry and bad conscience. One ought to find this on the whole *fair and right*, even though it may make the coming century a dangerous one and put everybody under the necessity of carrying a gun: by this fact alone it constitutes a counter-force which is a constant reminder that there is no such thing as a morality with an exclusive monopoly of the moral, and that every morality that affirms itself alone destroys too much valuable strength and is bought too dear. Men who deviate from the usual path and are so often the inventive and productive men shall no longer be sacrificed; it shall not even be considered disgraceful to deviate from morality, either in deed or thought; numerous novel experiments shall be made in ways of life and modes of society; a tremendous burden of bad conscience shall be expelled from the world – these most universal goals ought to be recognised and furthered by all men who are honest and seek truth! (D 164)

The epistemological purchase of experimentation that challenges disciplinary boundaries through practices considered ‘unscholarly’ or ‘feral’ is addressed by Herscher in the *Guide*, and can be illuminated using three examples: the Detroit Geographical Expedition, Loveland, and the mapping project: Windsor’s Vacant Buildings and Lots. Herscher defines ‘Feral Research’ in Detroit as:

...an improvised and provisional study of an improvised and provisional city. Feral research is devoid of commitment to a discipline; it is dedicated to the exploration of circumstances rather than to the extension of a body of knowledge. Feral research promises neither contributions nor predictable outcomes; opportunistic and tactical, the feral researcher makes it up as she goes.³⁷²

³⁷² Herscher, *Guide*, 106.

To illustrate, Herscher begins with a catalogue entry that introduces the Detroit Geographical Expedition, an experiment in radical geography that ran in the 1960's; as:

...a platform to produce a new sort of spatial knowledge – neither disciplinary nor professional knowledge, but knowledge that could serve as a resource for Detroit and, most especially, for the city's disenfranchised African-American population.³⁷³

A project pioneered by William Bunge, at the time a professor in the Geography department at Wayne State University in Midtown, Detroit, the expedition proposed to map the affective dimensions of neighbourhoods focusing on disadvantaged residents' own relationship to their environment. The project attempted to produce "...an atlas of human needs..."³⁷⁴ Founding the Society for Human Exploration (SHE), Bunge along with Gwendolyn Warren engaged with this project in order to "...reorient geographical research in directions of direct human concern, initiating the exploration of the human regions of geography, and instituting a developmental rather than an extractive program of geographical exploration."³⁷⁵ Rather than relying upon professional geographers, Bunge and Warren recruited and worked with (paid) area residents who have the experience of inhabiting their environment ("the taxi driver with 20 years of experience, the destitute [sic.], the hospitalless [sic.], etc."³⁷⁶)

The problem Bunge and Warren were trying to address engages how academic research is adopted as an area of study. Academics, they argue, tend to have their areas of specialization in subsets of their disciplines and a career

³⁷³ Herscher, *Guide*, 108.

³⁷⁴ William Bunge and Gwendolyn Warren, *Field Notes: III*, The Detroit Geographical Expedition and Institute, 1971, 11.

³⁷⁵ William Bunge and Gwendolyn Warren, *Field Notes: I*, The Detroit Geographical Expedition and Institute, 1969, Preface.

³⁷⁶ See William Bunge and Gwendolyn Warren, *Field Notes: III*, 11.

plan mapped out for them even before they engage with their area of study. Researchers, then, bring their research interests into the communities they study. These research interests proffered by academics to the communities in question in terms of findings tend not to engage the needs of these communities. Bunge notes: "...community-defined problems usually have nothing to do with the professor's career..."³⁷⁷ Bunge suggests a shift in priorities; one that would enter a community asking 'what do you need?' rather than demanding of that community that it take what the academic is interested in offering. Warren notes:

The point that the Expedition is trying to make with Geography, Natural Science, Sociology, and others is in offering our classes and research to the community. These fields are not specific areas of study. Rather it is that these are some sciences on one hand and these are some problems on the other hand, and you can pick one of these departments and someone has got something you can use.³⁷⁸

Methodologically, Bunge adds:

It is up to the geographer to study a region and realize, from the point of view of the people that live there, what is geographically out of whack. How does a geographer do that? By getting a "feel" of the region. By talking, listening, arguing, befriending, and by making enemies of the humans in the region. He knows what the people in the region need geographically by becoming a person of that region.³⁷⁹

Bunge notes that, in circumstances where researchers become dependent upon the community, they are directing their research toward, typical power relations faced by Geographers become reversed.

Bunge was reputed to have been fired from Wayne State's Department of Geography in 1970, and he was blacklisted as a communist sympathiser by the US Government, rendering him unemployable in the US. Following this Bunge briefly taught at the University of Western Ontario (1970-71) and York University (1972-73). Now Bunge is believed to reside in Quebec. The expedition,

³⁷⁷ Bunge and Warren, *Field Notes I*, 5.

³⁷⁸ Bunge and Warren, *Field Notes III*, 6.

³⁷⁹ Bunge and Warren, *Field Notes I*, 6.

however, was re-launched by a group of Michigan architecture students in 2009. Their project focused on an Eastside Detroit neighbourhood its purpose was to produce "...a complex atlas documenting a series of spatial conditions, events and practices in and around the neighborhood... ...founded on the urban knowledge and experience of the city's marginalized communities, groups and individuals."³⁸⁰

More recently an organization called Loveland Technologies has taken up the project of 'radical geography.' This organization in Detroit describes their project as one devoted to "...arming people with information to battle a plague of tax foreclosures and running an ongoing survey of property conditions to help fight blight."³⁸¹ Loveland began with a micro-real estate project, inviting investors to symbolically purchase a square inch of land in Detroit. These 'inch-vestments', they argue, form micro-hoods that are visit-able and viewable online, which are virtual communities. They explain further:

We aim to provide a fun, game-like ownership experience while creating entertainment fundraising, community collaboration, and social mapping tools that work at any scale. You can see this in our micro-grant program, work with the Imagination Station, solar powered camera system, and in-development macro map of Detroit. We believe the global network of the internet can be applied to hyper local development in powerful new ways. Detroit is an amazing city to be working in because it presents so many challenges to be solved and so many unique opportunities to participate through this lens.³⁸²

The move from micro-real estate to real-real estate was a natural one. In 2011, Loveland built an interface that mapped the entirety of the 2011 Wayne County tax foreclosure auction and called it 'Why Don't We Own This?'. The micro-real

³⁸⁰ Herscher, *Guide*, 109.

³⁸¹ Loveland, "Loveland Technologies," Accessed April 26, 2016. <https://makeloveland.com/company>.

³⁸² "About Loveland," Loveland, Accessed April 26, 2016. <http://inchernet.com/about>

estate project is now in hibernation. The organization has now turned to city-scale problems by mapping blight through a crowdsourcing mapping platform, acting as watch-dogs for the Wayne County foreclosure process, etc. Loveland works in conjunction with community groups like the Motor City Blight Busters and a number of community agriculture collectives who face issues with funding, acquisition and use of space within the city.

Similarly, a crowdsourced urban cartography project called “Vacant Windsor” has emerged across the river from Detroit in response to the practices of city administration that are perceived by residents to encourage urban sprawl. Vacant Windsor’s Project is a crowdsourced collection of images of vacant buildings and lots in Windsor Ontario. A facebook post, in the form of guidelines to participating vacancy collectors, explains the aims of this group more fully:

It isn't our intention to identify or shame any property owners, our intention is simply to make us all more mindful and to help us all make the connection between continual sprawl development and the increasing holes in our city. ... Our population isn't growing, and it hasn't grown for years, but the boundaries keep getting pushed out. Even though we already have too many buildings we're still trying to put up more by developing fresh land, which will just cause even more holes in areas already developed. At the same time, we take on the never-ending costs of all the usual city services – roads, sewers, water, buses. The vacant buildings act as dead zones, sucking all the economic energy and human vitality out of the street they are on. The longer they sit empty, the more blighted they become.³⁸³

This group is loosely connected with Citizens for an Accountable Mega-Hospital Planning Process (CAMPP), who argue that the proposed new location of Windsor Regional Hospital, to be located on a 60 acre greenfield site on the outskirts of the city, will be a grave mistake.

³⁸³ Vacant Windsor, “Facebook: Vacant Windsor,” December 16, 2015, Accessed April 26, 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Windsorblight/>.



Figure 3.19 *Walker Power from Riverside Drive. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.*

Clearly, the interests of these two citizen groups align. Both organizations focus upon consultancy and intensification of development within the urban core.

CAMPP argues:

CAMPP believes that with an enhanced public consultation process, and with a dedication to progressive and responsible urban planning practices, Windsor's next hospital will not only effectively serve both city and county residents, but do so while remaining as an institution within Windsor's urban core. We are advocates for preserving Essex County's valuable farmland and green spaces, for the adaptive reuse of brownfield sites, and for vibrant future in Windsor and Essex County.³⁸⁴

Vacant Windsor argues:

Windsor-Essex has had essentially the same population since 1970 but we have continued to sprawl on new land for decades, leaving more and more urban vacancies behind. We have had no significant population growth, nor is any predicted. The sprawling has to stop. We ask that you let your city councillors know that we want the

³⁸⁴ CAMPP, "CAMPP: Citizens for an Accountable Megahospital Planning Process: About," Accessed April 26, 2016. <http://windsormegahospital.weebly.com/about-campp.html>

vacancy crisis in Windsor addressed, and as a first step, demand that council do everything in its power to prevent new greenfield development.³⁸⁵



Figure 3.20 CAMPP Lawn Signs. Windsor, On. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Without taking a side regarding the site of the proposed new location of Windsor Regional Hospital, I have attended a number of community consultancy meetings with city officials in Windsor. These meetings usually take the form of a poorly laid out power-point presentation from the city officials telling the public what they are going to do, such as a re-design to a streetscape in your neighbourhood. The city officials are then open to answering questions about their plan, although they are extremely belligerent to and visibly annoyed with resident requests for alterations to the proposed plan.

³⁸⁵ "Vacant Windsor," Accessed April 26, 2016. <http://vacantwindsor.weebly.com/>.



Figure 3.21 *Proposed Mega-Hospital Site. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.*

These meetings usually degenerate to residents shouting at the city officials who respond in terms of appeals to city policies. The proposed plans are then executed as presented, failing to take into account resident concerns or requests. This process runs in sharp contrast to the methodology employed by Bunge and the Detroit Geographical Expedition, which advocates for communities open to extra-disciplinary affective concerns and which is open to the point of view of the people who live there.

Nietzsche, as observed in the preceding chapter, advocates for dispositions that foster active engagement with life (history, culture, place, the systems and power structures that we inhabit, etc.) since, for Nietzsche, to know the structures of our context is to know ourselves. There is no possibility that this

can be done passively or from a wholly rational perspective of disinterest. Nor is there a possibility that a healthy disposition to life can be bought 'off the rack', so to speak, by (for example) picking up a flag and picking a side in an ideological struggle. These systems are our own and so we must assert ourselves over and against them by forming our identities through practice. In the end, these systems are just tools we inhabit that either allow for the expression of our human capacities, or frustrate them in ways that should be challenged and resisted. This much became apparent with our discussion of Nietzsche's treatment of character above. We are *insurgents*. Critique cannot remain in a reflective reserve – it must be lived and demand in light of any system, no matter how old or venerated, the right to express and expand human capacities. Again, as Nietzsche notes of this purely critical disposition as it pertains to his new category of philosophers:

Perhaps he even needs to have been a critic and a sceptic and a dogmatist and a historian, and in addition a poet and collector and traveller and puzzle solver and moralist and seer and 'free spirit' and nearly all things, so that he can traverse the range of human values and value-feelings and *be able* to look with many kinds of eyes and consciences from the heights into every distance, from the depths into every height, from the corners into every wide expanse. But all these are only the preconditions for his task: the task itself calls for something else – it calls for him to *create values*. (BGE 211)

To further illustrate, we will briefly look back to the urban agricultural movement in Detroit. When distilled into an argument in the classical sense this movement pertains to what Herscher terms (with regard to the Georgia Street Community Garden) "food insecurity"³⁸⁶ relegating the affective nature of the hunger of this community to a proposition presented as a reason in support of a number of urban agricultural activities. Where is the reason? Within the

³⁸⁶ See Herscher, *Guide*, 48.

structure of language expressed as an argument schema? No. The 'reason' lies rather in the affective experience of the community and is directed not towards an abstract conclusion of the argument, but towards the material conditions that give rise to the affective experience of hunger. Further, when treated propositionally in terms of neat argument schema, urban agriculture is treated reductively and undervalued. Again, Nietzsche argues:

We stop appreciating ourselves when we communicate. Our actual experiences are not in the least talkative. They could not express themselves if they wanted to. For they lack the words to do so. When we have words for something we have already gone beyond it. In all speech there is a grain of contempt. Language, it seems, was invented only for average, middling, communicable things. The speaker *vulgarizes* himself as soon as he speaks. – From a morality for deaf-mutes and other philosophers. (TI "Reconnaissance Raids" 26)

This initiative for community gardening occurred within a complex context, which began with Mark Covington, having been laid off from his manufacturing job in 2008, spending more time in the neighbourhood. The gardens grew initially out of his efforts to clear garbage (dumped by scrappers who strip valuable materials out of vacant buildings that litter Detroit's landscape) off three city-owned lots next to his grandmother's home. These gardens, which are tended by volunteers and harvested by children living in the neighbourhood, now serve as a rally point from which to address additional issues faced by the neighbourhood residents beyond food insecurity. The space used – disused city space initially squatted upon by the community – has come to foster intergenerational collaboration, hosts movie screenings, educational programs such as reading groups, and skill sharing workshops, and (as Herscher notes) "...serves as a nexus for the formation of new social networks..."³⁸⁷

³⁸⁷ Herscher, *Guide*, 48.



Figure 3.22 *Georgia Street Community Garden Beds.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

A few simple actions meant to address several specific issues arising from a failing economy and city systems (idle time, the lack of useful work, garbage accumulation, hunger, etc.) have evolved into an experimental community that suggests and demonstrates through practice new forms of collaboration and mutual support in the context of failing and sometimes belligerent city systems. Most of all, by engaging with this collaborative project, members of this

community develop a new dispositional relationship to one another, their city, and their lives.



Figure 3.23 *Georgia Street Community Garden, Community Center Garden.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

It is this sort of action that is cut off by the reflective quietism of traditional critical theory. This is the second movement of immanent critique articulated by Antonio, one that aims to “...point to the determinant possibilities for overcoming

the contradiction. The critique is not an idealist reduction because it aims to become a basis, not a substitute, for praxis.”³⁸⁸

Hardt and Negri make some headway with articulating the interconnectedness of urban movements engaged at the level of culture with their notions of *the common*, *multitude*, and *biopolitics*. These movements, in an interpretation that runs against the grain of the reductive notion of ‘political’ as offered by Herscher, work in the medium of social and cultural ties that are directed forms of political criticism. They argue:

The genealogy of resistances and struggles in postmodernity... presupposes *the political nature of social life* and adopts it as an internal key to all the movements. This presupposition is basic, in fact, to the concept of biopolitics and the biopolitical production of subjectivity. Here economic, social, and political questions are inextricably intertwined. Any theoretical effort in this context to pose the autonomy of the political, separate from the social and economic, no longer makes any sense.³⁸⁹

The treatment of *insurgency* offered by Hardt and Negri in *Multitude* inverts the common understanding that would present resistance as a response or reaction to power. Rather, they argue that “...*resistance is primary with respect to power...*”³⁹⁰ much like, in the analysis offered by Marx, with respect to Capital, labour is primary. Hardt and Negri argue that the contemporary scene of labour and production is being transformed by the hegemony of ‘immaterial labour’, by which they mean “...labor that produces immaterial products, such as information, knowledges, ideas, images, relationships, and affects.”³⁹¹ This sort of labour, they argue, tends to “...blur the distinction between work time and

³⁸⁸ Antonio, “Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory,” 342.

³⁸⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 78.

³⁹⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 64.

³⁹¹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 65.

nonwork time, extending the work day indefinitely to fill all of life...”,³⁹²

emphasizing the flexibility³⁹³ and mobility³⁹⁴ of this new working class. Immaterial labour is ultimately biopolitical, they argue, since this labour no longer aims at the production of a material product, but rather at the production of subjectivity. They explain:

Immaterial labor is *biopolitical* in that it is oriented to the creation of forms of social life; such labour, then, tends no longer to be limited to the economic but also becomes immediately a social, cultural, and political force. Ultimately, in philosophical terms, the production here is the *production of subjectivity*, the creation and reproduction of new subjectivities in society.³⁹⁵

They further argue that immaterial labour can only be conducted in common, since it “...tends to take the social form of networks based on communication, collaboration, and affective relationships.”³⁹⁶ This form of labour, they argue, gives rise to “...new and intense forms of violation or alienation.”³⁹⁷ Given the forms of power associated with immaterial labour and biopolitical production, their new potentially revolutionary class, the multitude, has the capacity to unleash

...the real, creative forces that are emerging with the potential to create a new world. The great production of subjectivity of the multitude, its biopolitical capacities, its struggle against poverty, its constant striving for democracy, all coincide here with the genealogy of these resistances stretching from the early modern era to our own.³⁹⁸

When laying out their schema for genealogical analysis of the changing forms of resistance, Hardt and Negri identify three guiding principles. First, they seek to identify “...the historical occasion, that is, the form of resistance that is most

³⁹² Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 66.

³⁹³ “...to function without stable long-term contracts and thus to adopt the precarious position of becoming flexible...” (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 66.)

³⁹⁴ “...able to move continually among locations...” (Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 66.)

³⁹⁵ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 66.

³⁹⁶ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 66.

³⁹⁷ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 66.

³⁹⁸ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 68.

effective in combating a specific form of power.”³⁹⁹ Second, they argue that the forms of resistance and transformations of economic and social production correspond. “[I]n each era ...the model of resistance that proves to be most effective turns out to have the same form as the dominant models of economic and social production.”⁴⁰⁰ The third principle identified in their genealogy presents itself as ideologically rooted value judgments: democracy and freedom. The values of democracy and freedom, they argue, are the basis of every great revolutionary struggle. They argue emphatically, in reference to a summary of guerilla warfare and resistance struggles that, the basis of these struggles was not to overcome particular forms of political or material oppression. Rather, “*What these foundational wars really produce, in the final analysis, and often subsequently cannot satisfy, is a great desire for democracy.*”⁴⁰¹

As far back as Socrates, support for a particular political system does not rest on the inherent value of that political system as an end in itself. Rather (as we see from the arguments presented in the *Apology*), the value of a political system is estimated by the extent to which it allows for the expression of human capacities. Democracy was the best political system for Athens insofar as it allowed the rational and deliberative capacities of human beings to most fully express themselves. The gadfly argument, by this reading, posits that a democratic system must make room for the expression of disquieting arguments not only because they are expedient to the proper functioning of that system, but because to engage the specifically human questions – questions of value – is the

³⁹⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 68.

⁴⁰⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 68.

⁴⁰¹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 74.

highest expression of humanity. That is, democracy is not valuable in itself, and therefore, cannot and should not be used as the basis for an argument. We can amend the statement above from Hardt and Negri to read: *What these foundational wars really produce, in the final analysis, and often subsequently cannot satisfy, is a political system that fosters great expressions of human capacities.* This proposition is actually far more consistent with the application of the production of new forms of the common as a form of social and political normative standard. To hold up a particular political ideal as that which grounds revolution undercuts the capacities for political invention at the root of their notion of revolution.

Reformulating the position held by Hardt and Negri in a manner that extracts the baggage of ideological assumptions would also bring their theory into a dialogue more productively with Nietzsche. Nietzsche was highly suspect of democracy and its impositions of the false presuppositions and values of equality and the independence of the private person. While Nietzsche frequently laments the mediocrity of mass culture, he just as frequently valorizes the capacities for the highest expressions of culture, thus imposing a judgment of rank that initially seems to cut against the grain of the common. For Hardt and Negri, the notion of the common

...does not position humanity separate from nature, as either its exploiter or its custodian, but focuses rather on the practices of interaction, care, and cohabitation in a common world, promoting the beneficial and limiting the detrimental forms of the common.⁴⁰²

The key to reconciling Hardt and Negri with Nietzsche rests on our interpretation of 'beneficial' and 'detrimental' forms of the common and, more generally, what

⁴⁰² Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, viii.

aspects of the common are celebrated and encouraged to express themselves through their account. In the previous chapters it became quite clear that Hardt and Negri champion exceptional expressions of the common, or "...a new production of the common..."⁴⁰³ rather than the banal commonness criticized so vehemently by Nietzsche as:

...a shared struggle against everything rare, strange, privileged, against the higher human, the higher soul, the higher duty, the higher responsibility, the creative abundance of power and elegance... (BGE 212)

Such an understanding of the value of the common would impose the very leveling effect that lies at the root of Nietzsche's criticisms of both socialism and democracy as well as blocking the expressiveness of the common championed by Hardt and Negri.

While Nietzsche forcefully asserts in *Human All Too Human* that "...the time is coming when institutions arise to serve the true common needs of all people..." (HH I 476), these institutions were decidedly not democratic. Of democratic power, Nietzsche asserts that it "...regards as nothing but the instrument of the popular will, not as an Above in relation to Below but merely as a function of the sole sovereign power, the people..." (HH I 472) In such a state, one that presents itself as "...the unshackling of the private person...",⁴⁰⁴ (HH I 472) the opinion of the people "...must find its echo in their representatives." (HH I 472) Though the legitimatization of the democratic state in fact relies upon the religious feeling by Nietzsche's argument, more specifically an agonism between the religious and anti-religious, it is precisely this religious feeling that the

⁴⁰³ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 254.

⁴⁰⁴ "Disregard for and the decline and *death of the state*, the liberation of the private person (I take care not to say: of the individual), is the consequence of the democratic conception of the state' it is in this that its mission lies." (HH I 472)

democratic state undermines by turning religion into "...a private affair..." (HH I 472) This ultimately undermines the legitimacy of the moral basis for the state and it paves the way for "Private companies... [to] ...step by step absorb the business of the state..." (HH I 472) As Sluga notes of Nietzsche's view of the democratic state, "...it is evident that he is speaking of a modern variety of democracy that incorporates the distinctive ideas of popular sovereignty and political equality, of the representative form of government and of liberal individualism."⁴⁰⁵ Nietzsche's central thesis in this section is that the democratic state is not a stand-alone institution, but rather, represents "...the historical form of the *decay of the state*." (HH I 472)

In *The Wanderer and His Shadow* we find Nietzsche in his most generous attitude towards democracy. Building democracies, he asserts, has value as "...tremendous *prophylactic measures*..." (WS 275) and, further, as "...quarantine arrangements to combat that ancient pestilence, lust for tyranny..." (WS 289) Here Nietzsche argues that democracies derive their advantage from flattering 'the people' by granting "...alleviations and liberties of every kind..." (WS 292) In the same line of thought, however, Nietzsche discusses the necessity "...to deprive of the right to vote both those who possess no property and the genuinely rich: for these are the two impermissible classes of men at whose abolition it must work continually..." (WS 293) To these two classes Nietzsche adds any who would "...organize parties...", since they would naturally be the "...enemies of independence..." (WS 293)

⁴⁰⁵ Sluga, "The Time Is Coming," 37.

The largest problem democracy represents to the thought expressed in the writings of Nietzsche is that it imposes a false equality, while he was (as Sluga notes) "...convinced that a distinction of rank underlies every stable political order."⁴⁰⁶ Effectively, the imposition of a false equality and holding independence up as an ideal blocks the expression of the exceptional. While Nietzsche is plainly dismissive of cultural engagement with politics in *Human All Too Human*, considering fealty to the state to be tantamount to "...the squandering away men of highest civilization..." (HH I 442), Sluga correctly notes that in his later work, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche "...was willing to concede the possibility of their reconciliation."⁴⁰⁷ Sluga explains: "This new form of great politics was to be the work of exceptional men producing entirely new values, new hierarchies and orders of value..."⁴⁰⁸ Of these 'exceptional men' Nietzsche notes:

They would be every bit justified in calling themselves critics; and surely they will be men who experiment. By the name that I have dared to call them I have already expressly underlined their acts of experimenting and their joy in experimenting: did I do this because these critics in body and soul like to make use of experiments in new, perhaps extended, perhaps more dangerous senses? Will they, in their passion for knowledge, take their daring and painful experiments farther than the soft and spoiled taste of a democratic century can sanction? (BGE 210)

A merely critical stance, however, would make Nietzsche's venerated new philosopher no better than the Frankfurt theorist who dwells in the negative. To Nietzsche's new philosopher, "...critics are the tools of the philosopher, and precisely because they are tools they are a long way from being philosophers themselves." (BGE 210) Conversely, Nietzsche identifies the task of the new

⁴⁰⁶ Sluga, "The Time Is Coming," 43.

⁴⁰⁷ Sluga, "The Time Is Coming," 46.

⁴⁰⁸ Sluga, "The Time Is Coming," 46.

philosopher (though only after becoming able to “...*subdue* the entire past...”), as calling “...for him to *create values*.” (BGE 211) Certainly this is to be done on the basis of the common, or on the basis of “...previous value-*assumptions*, value-creations that have become dominant...” (BGE 211) However, rather than dwelling in criticism and the negative, these new philosophers and experimenters are:

...*commanders and lawgivers*. They say, ‘this is the way it *should* be!’ Only they decide about mankind’s Where to? and What for? and to do so they employ the preparatory work of all philosophical workers, all subduers of the past. With creative hands they reach towards the future, and everything that is or has existed becomes their means, their tool, their hammer. Their ‘knowing’ is *creating*, their creating is law-giving, their will to truth is – *will to power*. (BGE 211)

In what other way should we appraise the prolonged struggle of the ‘singularities’ comprising a multitude constantly under siege by “[empire that] spreads globally its network of hierarchies and divisions that maintain order through new mechanisms of control and constant conflict”?⁴⁰⁹ Either there must be something *exceptional* and *uncommon* in the expression of the common that resists these hierarchies, divisions and imposed order, or Hardt and Negri drastically underestimate the totalizing effects of biopower upon the affects or “...hierarchy of inner states...” (BGE 213) of singularities. When the subjectivity of ‘singularities’ is constituted at the affective level by biopower, when ‘singularities’ depend upon the systems that oppress them, resistance can be understood as nothing less than exceptional.

To illustrate, when in Detroit on my informal residency I had the opportunity to sit down for a coffee at the Motor City Java House with John J.

⁴⁰⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, xiii.

George (the founder of Motor City Blight Busters) and his wife and collaborator Alicia (who runs the Java House).



Figure 3.24 *Graffiti Gallery at Motor City Java House 1, Blight Busters Home Base. Detroit, MI. June 18, 2014. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.*

These are individuals in the trenches fighting blight and struggling with uncommon energy to stabilize neighbourhoods against the forces of ongoing abandonment and crime with very limited resources. I naively assumed that those involved in such struggle would be implicitly critical of the systems of power that frame their struggle. At this meeting I innocently asked where their funding came from, suggesting that, in Canada such efforts would have multiple opportunities to apply for grant funds at the municipal, provincial, and federal level. I was unprepared for the level of venom with which the accusatory question: 'Are you saying that socialized Canada does better than corporate

America?!?!’ was issued. In the back of my mind the words, ‘Yes! Yes! Yes! Just look around!’ floated pregnant yet unarticulated as I mustered the conciliatory statement that: ‘No, it’s just different and I am trying to understand the difference.’ They then explained that Home Depot has been really good to them. Additionally, Mike Duggan had recently been elected as mayor of Detroit. They reported that his administration (then still under chapter 9 protection) had been more supportive than previous regimes. It should be noted that the work that Blight Busters does is unambiguously exceptional and runs against the grain of the construction of the ‘private person’ that Nietzsche takes pains not to call an ‘individual’ in *Human All Too Human* 472 (“A Glance At The State”); so exceptional that I was surprised not to find an immediately critical disposition to private businesses absorbing the business of the state.

Again, as Nietzsche notes, systems of government mean little in the context of these sorts of struggle. He argues, employing the productive tensions between habitual principles and the wounding performed by ‘degenerate natures’:

A people that becomes somewhere weak and fragile but is as a whole still strong and healthy is capable of absorbing the infection of the new and incorporating it to its own advantage. In the case of the individual human being, the task of education is to imbue him with such firmness and certainty he can no longer as a whole be in any way deflected from his path. Then, however, the educator has to inflict injuries upon him, or employ the injuries inflicted on him by fate, and when he has thus come to experience pain and distress something new and noble can be inoculated into the injured places. It will be taken up into the totality of his nature, and later the traces of its nobility will be perceptible in the fruits of his nature. – So far as the state is concerned, Machiavelli says that ‘the form of government signifies very little, even though semi-educated people think otherwise. The great goal of statecraft should be *duration*, which outweighs everything else, inasmuch as it is much more valuable than freedom.’ Only when there is securely founded and guaranteed long duration is a steady evolution and ennobling inoculation at all possible: though the dangerous companion of all duration, established authority, will, to be sure, usually resist it. (HH I 224)

As we noted in the previous chapter, while the delinquent may seem to be the active element of this dynamic, and therefore advocated by Nietzsche, it is the tension between delinquent ‘wounding’ and the fertile ground of a culture or ‘people’ sufficiently strong and healthy to absorb the inoculation of something new that provide the horizon within which spiritual progress becomes possible. Systems of authority and rule are just that – systems, and as systems they require an *insurgent* disposition to dislodge them or to impel them toward progress and innovation, no matter what their form may be.

The revolutionary forces discussed by Hardt and Negri cut much deeper than their own analysis suggests. The schema they introduce, however, of a multitude of singularities normatively grounding itself through the production of the common is quite productive and holds a high degree of explanatory power when directed toward critical urbanist movements. In *Commonwealth*, in their discussion of the Metropolis, Hardt and Negri interject a useful observation regarding adversity and the emergence of networks of mutual support in their discussion of ‘African urban forms’ in conditions of extreme “deprivation and poverty”⁴¹⁰ They note:

From an external standpoint it is clear that urban planning has been largely absent or ineffective in most African metropolises. But these scholars focus on the fact that, despite crumbling infrastructure and destitute populations, the metropolises actually work – most often through informal networks of communication, mobility, employment, exchange, and cooperation that are largely invisible to outsiders. The multitude of the poor, in other words, invents strategies for survival, finding shelter and producing forms of social life, constantly discovering and creating resources of the common through expansive circuits of encounter. That is not to say, of course: Don’t worry about the poor, their life is lovely! All cities should be like these! The importance of these studies is to

⁴¹⁰ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 254.

demonstrate, even in conditions of extreme adversity, what the poor can do, how they can produce the common and organize encounters.⁴¹¹

To illustrate these “...informal networks of communication, mobility, employment, exchange, and cooperation that are largely invisible to outsiders...”⁴¹² consider the neighbourhood action: Neighbours Building Brightmoor, discussed by Herscher as “Brightmoor Farmway.”⁴¹³ Herscher introduces this community network of mutual support:

Brightmoor is a neighborhood in Northwest Detroit with large numbers of abandoned buildings and vacant lots. The neighborhood’s growth was spurred in the beginning of the 20th century by the nearby development of auto industry facilities; its decline was reciprocally spurred by the post-war suburbanization of those same facilities. As the neighborhood’s working-class residents left to find employment elsewhere, their houses were sold to landlords. In weak-market conditions, these houses were cheaply rented, leading to further downturns in property values. In combination with a national economic slowdown, a local epidemic of crack cocaine use, and an upsurge of gang violence, Brightmoor’s decline became precipitous in the 1980’s. ... Around one quarter of all property in Brightmoor is currently vacant. In recent years, some neighborhood residents have come to perceive this vacancy as offering a precious opportunity to self-organize the development of their community.⁴¹⁴

Herscher’s brief analysis celebrates the gradual networking of various community projects: over 20 community gardens, pocket parks on vacant lots, “...the linkage of gardens and parks by a neighborhood-scale ‘farmway’”⁴¹⁵ orchards, wildflower gardens, and a market garden for youth in the neighbourhood. This expansive network of community organizations and neighbourhood projects works in conjunction with Detroit’s wide organizations such as the Motor City Blight Busters, The Greening of Detroit, Detroit urban agricultural support networks, school programs, etc.

⁴¹¹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 254.

⁴¹² Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth* 254.

⁴¹³ Herscher, *Guide*, 52.

⁴¹⁴ Herscher, *Guide*, 52.

⁴¹⁵ Herscher, *Guide*, 52.



Figure 3.25 *Brightmoor Farmway Shed*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

As impressive as the expansive "...infrastructure that connects agricultural and cultural spaces, planned and informal initiatives, and sites of food production and food consumption..."⁴¹⁶ may be, the methodologies of collaboration and tactical habitation employed are even more impressive. For example, as noted by Herscher, "...a local epidemic of crack cocaine use..."⁴¹⁷ was compounded by neighbourhood abandonment leading to drug trafficking and production occurring in low-rent or squatted abandoned houses within the neighbourhood. This problem became apparent to community organizers at their first community harvest festival at which there were 200 attendees, 150 of those from the neighbourhood, including 100 children.

⁴¹⁶ Herscher, *Guide*, 52.

⁴¹⁷ Herscher, *Guide*, 52.



Figure 3.26 *Brightmoor Farmway Youth Garden*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

The web page for the organization notes “The presence of all the children set the tone for 2011. We were unaware of the number of children living in our neighborhood. This showed how many youth were staying indoors and we set out to change that.”⁴¹⁸ Though not formally noted in their public materials, the network of community organizations engaged in a program of tactical habitation, holding festivals and children’s events in proximity to the low-rent or squatted abandoned houses known to be used for drug production and trafficking, effectively pushed these activities out of the neighbourhood.

⁴¹⁸ Neighbors Building Brightmoor, “Neighbors Building Brightmoor: History,” Accessed April 25, 2016. <http://neighborsbuildingbrightmoor.org/about-us/a-brief-history/>.



Figure 3.27 *Brightmoor Farmway Beds and Benches.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

As a result of these coordinated and networked efforts, this self-generated substratum of organized mutual support and engagement is in the process of stabilizing its neighbourhood and providing its residents with a public life that expresses what Herscher calls a right to the city. It is within such contexts that the substrata of the common becomes most apparent through what Hardt and Negri call "...informal networks of communication, mobility, employment, exchange, and cooperation that are largely invisible to outsiders..."⁴¹⁹ It is through these networks, constituted by radical social experimentation and criticism that disrupt and demand expression within the habitual workings of city systems, that "...something new and noble can be inoculated into the injured

⁴¹⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 254.

places.” (HH I 224) These networks that act as a substratum, even within cities that ‘function’, that do much of the work of securing and sustaining city life of populations.



Figure 3.28 *Brightmoor Farmway 'Litter Free'.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Jacobs is also sensitive to the idea that there are informal cultural practices and networks of mutual support at work within cities that city planners need to heed. She observes, “Formal public organizations in cities require an informal public life underlying them, mediating between them and the privacy of the people of the city.”⁴²⁰ To ignore the substratum of informal life is akin to the misunderstanding of the freedom of the will discussed by Nietzsche in part 1 of *Beyond Good and Evil*:

⁴²⁰ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 75.

'Freedom of the will' – that is the word for the complex pleasurable condition experienced by the person willing who commands and simultaneously identifies himself with the one who executes the command – as such he can share in enjoying a triumph over resistance, while secretly judging that it was actually his will that overcame that resistance. Thus the person willing adds to his pleasurable feeling as commander the pleasurable feelings of the successful executing instrument, the serviceable 'underwill' or under-soul (our body after all is nothing but a social structure of many souls). *L'effet c'est moi*: what is occurring here occurs in every well-structured happy community where the ruling class identifies with the success of the community as a whole. (BGE I 19)

Worse still, to govern a social arrangement like the cities in question in a manner that is belligerent to the workings of this 'informal social life,' the production of the common in terms used by Hardt and Negri "...poses obstacles and destroys or corrupts the common"⁴²¹, or in the terms we discussed in our treatment of Nietzsche, the inhibiting structure of the ego turns the drives back upon themselves in a manner that mutilates the drives. Again, the oscillation employed so frequently by Nietzsche becomes useful.

While the critical theory of Horkheimer and Adorno maps out the first movement of a mode of critique, Hardt and Negri potently map out a schema for understanding the city as the site of resistance for a potentially politically active class (the multitude) on the basis of the common. Both theoretical perspectives have their limitations: both are grounded in ideological positions that pre-figure the normative prescriptions of their modes of critique which undercut the revolutionary capacities of critique itself. The community organizations and artist collectives detailed above demonstrate a will to radical collaboration and experimental methods for engaging the problems and issues that arise as a way of life disintegrates and crumbles. These efforts depend on the energy, creativity, and initiative of those facing the pain and emergency of crisis. They

⁴²¹ Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth*, 258.

expand the capacities of those isolated by systems of power and economy to act through culture to assert themselves through self-organization and the production of values that run counter to the dominant culturally accepted habitual principles of the systems they inhabit and inhabit them. As Grace Boggs notes:

This is what revolutions are about. They are about creating a new society in the places and spaces left vacant by the disintegration of the old; about evolving to a higher Humanity; not higher buildings; about Love of one another and of the Earth, not Hate; about Hope, not Despair; about saying Yes to Life and No to War; about becoming the change we want to see in the world.⁴²²

These projects rely upon dispositions to values, to systems, to exchange, and to the presuppositions that lay within our own reflective consciousness, described admirably by Nietzsche as both critical and self-critical. We both inhabit our cities and they inhabit us. In both cases, even when we are tempted not to question these systems when they work well, we are called upon to become *insurgents* that rattle what Taylor, following Weber, calls the “iron cage” of atomism and instrumentalism.⁴²³

What follows is a shift in focus from an analysis of *insurgent* forces of resistance in the context of transitional deindustrializing cities, to an analysis of the structures that resist these *insurgent* forces and the limitations of *insurgency*. These structures take the form of values, presuppositions, belligerent and corrupt city systems, pollution, the economics and politics of globalization, the machinations of wealthy and powerful individuals, and even the blunt scale of the crisis of abandonment within Detroit. What follows in the fourth chapter will present the acts of *insurgency* detailed in this chapter as models for a way forward rather than themselves being sufficient to meet this crisis-context. This

⁴²² Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 134.

⁴²³ Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 98.

does not mean that the massive efforts of these Windsorites and Detroiters are purely symbolic. These projects do materially engage with the crisis-contexts they face by presenting practical solutions to pressing problems. The task here is to make explicit those critical and normative forces implicitly present within the *insurgent* actions, thus lending force to the prescription issued by Boggs about “...becoming the change we want to see in the world.”⁴²⁴ This prescription is echoed by Nietzsche when he discusses the manner of lived answer to moral philosophy issued by a healthy morality:

We who are different, we immoralists, on the contrary, have opened our hearts to all kinds of understanding, comprehending, *approving*. We do not readily deny; we seek our honour in being *affirmative*. More and more our eyes have been opened to that economy which still needs and can exploit all that is rejected by the holy madness of the priest... to that economy in the law of life which can give advantage even from the repulsive species of the miseryguts, the priest, the virtuous man – *what* advantage? – But we ourselves, we immoralists are the answer here... (TI “Morality as Anti-Nature” 6)

Nietzsche presents the immoralist as the answer insofar as, from their affirmative and creative disposition, they live their critiques and become the paragons of the sorts of new values they strive to create. It is not as though some sort of reflective organ divorced from the body, the world, and from practice plays puppet master in the lived struggles of the activists and exceptional practitioners described in this chapter. Rather, like the artistic dimension of the new philosopher described by Nietzsche, these activists and practitioners create themselves as they engage in making their place their own “...no longer do anything ‘arbitrarily’, but rather by necessity that their feeling of freedom, subtlety, authority, of creative placing, ordering, shaping comes into its own – in short, that for them necessity and ‘freedom of will’ become one and the same.” (BGE 213)

⁴²⁴ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 134.

Psychically capable of meeting the challenges of their context, with this sort of embedded and embodied critical and propositional activity, "...a hierarchy of inner states... corresponds to the hierarchy of problems..." (BGE 213)

Transitional urban centers demand that activists and practitioners not be locked myopically within the fox hole of the dominant perspective, but rather have the capacity to "...traverse the range of human values and value-feelings and *be able* to look with many kinds of eyes and consciences from the heights into every distance, from the depths into every height, from the corners into every wide expanse." (BGE 211)

Making a life in the context of the extreme transitional urban deindustrializing center demands this. Our neighbourhood, street, and sidewalk life depend upon engagement, and that engagement depends upon a sort of self-mastery. Although particular activists and practitioners may falter and their experiments meet institutional resistance and run the danger of failure, such experimentation generally is vital as our traditional city systems and notions of what it means to be 'urban' themselves falter. To echo Nietzsche, in terms of what it means to be 'urban', our "...'knowing' is *creating*..." (BGE 211) as we find ourselves in the midst of this disquieting inquiry. To specific urban communities in Windsor and Detroit these questions and these practices are not academic considerations or curiosities, but rather, are the pressing questions that drive our lived-experience of city life – and in many cases are matters of survival.

4

Forces in the Way

I pulled into the station, the needle riding on “E.”

It was a mistake. In Detroit, if possible, you don’t get your gas on the east side. Not even at high noon. Because the east side of Motown is Dodge City – semilawless and crazy. Many times citizens don’t bother phoning the cops. And as if to return the favor, many times cops don’t bother to come.

It was gray and moist on Gratiot Avenue – pronounced *Gra-shit* – a main artery running from the center of the city into the eastern suburbs and farther still into the countryside. Six lanes wide and not a soul. Not a car. Not a bus. Just steam clouds billowing up from the sewer caps.⁴²⁵

When I describe Detroit at conferences and talks I always make a point of noting to the would-be explorer, in light of all the work I typically do to break down the effects of the myth surrounding this city, that ‘the danger is real.’



Figure 4.1 *Wyandotte Street 'Leopard's Lounge'. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.*

⁴²⁵ Le Duff, *Detroit*, 11.

We typically understand that any city has its rough parts, parts that tourists and outsiders who do not know the cultural landscape should probably avoid. There are parts of Windsor like this, known for drugs, prostitution, and a potential for violence. Entering these parts of the city can seem like walking into a seedy bar, where every eye in the place immediately turns to the door to size up the outsider to the internally governed and regulated illicit community. Long-time residents of Windsor know to avoid these areas that are, to recall the reflections offered by Jacobs, incapable of handling strangers. Windsor has small pockets of these areas that are, generally, the exception to the rule of fairly safe and well-regulated neighbourhoods in the sense described by Jacobs.⁴²⁶ While there does exist a general tension between the economic opportunism that exists in a small and waning manufacturing context and the emergent critical urbanist values exhibited through networks of mutual support, the urban landscape in Windsor remains relatively stable in most parts of the city. Windsor is, in this respect, the inverse of Detroit, where great effort has been made to ‘secure’ a relatively small area of the city around downtown, midtown, and a few other specific neighbourhoods, leaving (as noted with a bit of exaggeration in the passage above by LeDuff) much of the city to ‘semi-lawlessness’ and ‘craziness.’

In Detroit, many of the same factors that open up possibilities for urban activism and experimentation serve to undermine the creative potential of the critical activism at work in the region. It is possible to read publications such as Boggs’ *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism For The Twenty-First Century* in a way that generates the image of Detroit as a socialist and

⁴²⁶ See 1.1

activist utopia. In many ways Detroit is such a utopia, although frequently the reality of life in this city is that "...the possibilities brought about by emergency..."⁴²⁷ highlighted by Hercher in his *Guide*,⁴²⁸ while they do offer the opportunity for experimentation that would be impossible in more stable cities, often merely bring about more emergency and pain. While neglect can become a critical ally for activist community organizations like those at work in the urban agriculture movement in Detroit, that same neglect has produced the collapse of neighbourhoods and the conditions of hunger and food insecurity that makes this movement vital for those residents who engage with these cooperatives. While collective community organizations can have a stabilizing effect within the pocket neighbourhoods that manage to organize, these pocket neighbourhoods represent an archipelago of notable exceptions within a sea of crime, poverty, and systemic injustice brought about by the massive failure of city systems, corrupt business leaders and city officials, and a general lack of city governance within this sea of somewhat isolated neighbourhood communities.

As noted at the end of the second chapter along with Nietzsche, it is because of the weakness of politics, not because of strength, that the critical opportunities mobilized by activist communities have emerged. Crisis demands a human response.

⁴²⁷ Hercher, *Guide*, 15.

⁴²⁸ See 1.3, 3, and 3.1.



Figure 8.2 *Campus Martius Downtown Detroit.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

Recall, in *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche asserts:

Resurrection of the spirit. – A nation usually rejuvenates itself on the political sickbed and rediscovers its spirit, which it gradually lost in its seeking for and assertion of power. Culture owes this above all to the ages of political weakness. (HH I 465)

Leaders and exceptional individuals within communities emerge with uncommon energy to address the crisis brought on by political and institutional weakness, thereby demonstrating neatly the potency of Nietzsche’s reflections regarding the

conditions necessary for the production of genius. Nietzsche offers two examples to illustrate the emergence of the phenomenon of the genius: that of a prisoner who uses his wits in the search for escape, "...the most cold-blooded and tedious employment of every little advantage, can teach us what instrument nature sometimes makes use of to bring into existence genius..." (HH 231) The other example proffered by Nietzsche is that of "...someone who has completely lost his way in a forest but strives with uncommon energy to get out again sometimes discovers a new path which no one knows..." (HH 231) In either case, Nietzsche argues:

In general history *seems* to furnish the following instruction regarding the production of genius: mistreat and torment men – thus it cries to the passions of envy, hatred and contest – drive them to the limit, one against the other, nation against nation, and do it for centuries on end; then perhaps, a spark as it were thrown off by the fearful energy thus ignited, the light of genius will suddenly flare up; the will, made wild like a horse under the rider's spur, will then break out and leap over into another domain. (HH I 233)

Detroit, for the activist communities engaged with experimental urban practice, represents an agonistic context, where these small and self-organized collectives struggle with uncommon energy to produce pockets within the city where, to recall the 1913 poem by Edger Guest, 'life's worth living.'⁴²⁹ There are dangers in presenting Detroit unambiguously as a "...city of hope..."⁴³⁰, one where:

⁴²⁹ "In Detroit, life's worth living.

Every day;

In Detroit, we are giving,

Joys away,

In Detroit, it is true,

That our skies are always blue,

There's a smile for me and you,

Blithe and gay." (Edgar A. Guest, Poet Laureate of Detroit, AKA The People's Poet, "In Detroit, life's worth living" was used as an advertising slogan by the Detroit Convention and Tourist Bureau starting in 1915)

⁴³⁰ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 105.

The thousands of vacant lots and abandoned houses provide not only the space to begin anew but also the incentive to create innovative ways of making our living – ways that nurture our productive, cooperative, and caring selves.⁴³¹

Proclamations like this run the risk of representing the city as though it is a blank canvas unambiguously inviting activist-artists to create in this context.

Specifically, this characterization obfuscates the cultural forces that resist the creation of innovative ways of making our living – those forces with a vested interest in the status quo. These powerful forces that assert themselves both materially and psychically – forces that have been discussed extensively in the earlier chapters as having a totalizing effect upon the affects or “...hierarchy of inner states...” (BGE 213) of singularities – must not be underestimated.⁴³² If, as I argue, a “...splendid tension of spirit...” (BGE “Preface”) exists in Detroit, this tension must be sustained on both ends. It is the goal of this chapter to address the forces that constitute the opposing side of this tension. In some cases these forces take the form of institutions that aim only to produce profit and serve to stifle the cooperative spirit of the community organizations that we have so far discussed.⁴³³ In other cases, it is members of the community itself that resist the representations and forms of reimagining of Detroit deployed by activist communities. In some senses we can be reminded of Taylor, who in his *The Malaise of Modernity*, identifies a connection between the atomism present in modern culture and the crushing weight of the institutionalized powers that work against the prescription issued by Tocqueville, for “...a vigorous political culture in which participation is valued, at several levels of government and in voluntary

⁴³¹ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 105.

⁴³² See 3.3.

⁴³³ See Chapter 3.

associations as well.”⁴³⁴ In the present context, one dominated by massive instrumental structures, Taylor argues:

...the atomism of the self-absorbed individual militates against this. Once participation declines, once the lateral associations that were its vehicles wither away, the individual citizen is left alone in the face of the vast bureaucratic state and feels, correctly, powerless. This demotivates the citizen even further, and the vicious cycle of soft despotism is joined.⁴³⁵

The landscape of Detroit itself in many ways reinforces this understanding of powerlessness. Boggs argues that the context of an abandoned and blighted environment invites us:

...to see vacant lots not as eyesores but as empty spaces inviting the viewer to fill them in with other forms, other structures that presage a new kind of city which will embody and nurture new life-affirming values in sharp contrast to the values of Materialism, Individualism and Competition that have brought us to this denouement.⁴³⁶

The scale of the challenge itself can be dispiriting, especially in a context where “...physical devastation on such a huge scale boggles the mind...”⁴³⁷, even massive efforts can seem small and ineffectual. This dispiriting effect is only compounded further when such efforts to “fill... [empty spaces] ... in with other forms...”⁴³⁸ are met with the cultural and institutional resistance mentioned above.

Attempts to reimagine Windsor and Detroit by the media, politicians, or business leaders tend to see the goal of generating vitality in this urban center in terms of a sudden transformation generated by the institution of massive development or economic plans. Such ‘Hail Mary’ attempts (‘elephant footstep,’ to borrow a phrase from Herron⁴³⁹) to revitalize these deindustrializing urban landscapes usually take the form of sports stadia or large sporting events, casino

⁴³⁴ Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 9.

⁴³⁵ Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 9-10.

⁴³⁶ Grace Lee Boggs, “One thing leads to another,” 102-103.

⁴³⁷ Grace Lee Boggs, “One thing leads to another,” 102-103.

⁴³⁸ Grace Lee Boggs, “One thing leads to another,” 102-103.

⁴³⁹ See P. 97 below.

gambling, or offering massive economic incentives to multi-national corporations to persuade them to set up shop within these cities. Each of these revitalization efforts were met with protest.⁴⁴⁰



Figure 4.3 Comerica Park. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

⁴⁴⁰ The institution of the 'economic renewal' plan involving casino gambling both in Windsor and Detroit, for example, was met by protests and arguments from citizens groups. Artist groups in Windsor were particularly vocal, since the interim site for the casino displaced the Art Gallery Windsor, forcing it to move to the Devonshire Mall (at the time in a location next door to the extreme budget store, Bi Way). In Detroit, James and Grace Lee Boggs were central to the protest movement. In her *The Next American Revolution*, Boggs recounts their involvement: "To defeat Coleman's casino gambling initiative, Jimmy and I helped to build a new formation called Detroiters Uniting. We described ourselves as a coalition of community groups – blue collar, white collar, and cultural workers; clergy members; political leaders; and professionals – who together embodied the rich ethnic and social diversity of our city. The principal concern of Detroiters Uniting was with "how our city has been disintegrating socially, economically, politically, morally and ethically. In the citywide referendum we were able to defeat the mayor's casino proposal." (Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 110.) This 1988 defeat was only a temporary victory. Another referendum in 1996 allowed the installment of several casino facilities in the city core.

The latest mega-project in Windsor, for example, took the form of a massive swimming complex within the city core meant to attract large swimming competitions to the city.



Figure 4.4 *Windsor International Aquatic and Training Centre.* Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

The facility is comprised of twin features: Windsor International Aquatic and Training Centre, a 10-lane pool that features two moveable bulkheads that allow for multiple configurations to fit the ideal length for any competition or community use; and Adventure Bay, a family water park. Aside from having the effect of producing economic conditions that occasioned the closing of several smaller community pools around the city as well as the YMCA pool at their downtown facility – facilities that were widely used inexpensively by the residents of Windsor

- the competition pool was built without proper seating capacity to house the largest events it was intended to host due to an oversight by city officials.



Figure 4.5 Adventure Bay. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

The family facilities are attended with much higher fees than other (now closed) municipal facilities and the swimming facility continues to operate in the red. In Detroit, in the midst of the largest municipal bankruptcy in North American history, plans were revealed to construct a new massive hockey arena for the Red Wings downtown at a projected cost of six hundred and fifty million dollars. Developments in Downtown and Midtown like this have given rise to an understanding throughout the neighbourhoods of Detroit that there are “two Detroit’s,” illustrating the divide between the “...eye-popping redevelopment in greater downtown and entrenched challenges in some of Detroit's fragile

neighborhoods.”⁴⁴¹ This notion, as earlier illustrated by revitalization projects like the ‘city within a city’ of the ‘RenCen’, or the ‘suburb with a city’ of Lafayette Park, has long been present within Detroit, but has reached a fever pitch in post-bankruptcy Detroit.



Figure 4.6 Lafayette Park Townhomes 1. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

The deal that allowed Detroit to exit from chapter 9 bankruptcy rested on a distinction between the ‘secured’ debts of the city held by corporations and the ‘unsecured’ debts involved with pension shortfalls. The November 8th, 2015 article in the Detroit Free Press, “Detroit Rising: Life after Bankruptcy” summarizes the effects of the chapter 9 exit plan on pensioners:

⁴⁴¹ Matthew Dolan, Susan Tompor, and John Gallagher, “Detroit Rising: Life After Bankruptcy,” Detroit Freepress, November 8, 2015, Accessed April 21, 2016. <http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/detroit-reborn/2015/11/08/detroit-rising-life-after-bankruptcy/75085252/>.

Under the plan, general pensioners were hit with 4.5% cuts on their monthly checks, the elimination of annual cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) increases, and a clawback [sic.] in excessive interest from annuity savings. Police and fire pensioners saw a reduction only in their COLA increases.⁴⁴²

If we take seriously the characterization of a city in terms of an ecosystem offered by Jacobs, the health of a city ecosystem (by her account) rests on the basis of a lively network of self-regulating engaged residents coming together in neighbourhoods and communities. If, additionally, we pay heed to the frequent oscillations between a culture and the individual human being,⁴⁴³ we can begin to understand fully the tensions at work within these transitioning cities that resist what Nietzsche characterizes as “...*spiritual progress*...” (HH I 224) in terms of the schema laid out in *Human, All Too Human*: ‘Tokens of Higher and Lower Culture’. In these cities, crisis occasions individuals “...who attempt new things and, in general, many things...” (HH I 224) to “...effect a loosening up and ...inflict an injury on the stable element of a community.” (HH I 224) It is, argues Nietzsche, at these moments at “...the political sickbed...” that a culture “...rediscovers its spirit, which it gradually lost in its seeking for and assertion of power.” (HH I 465) Here Nietzsche describes a trajectory. While the activists and community organizers in Windsor and Detroit may not perfectly exemplify the new philosopher or exceptional individual described by Nietzsche, this is not problematic since he describes this category of cultural practitioner as being “...on the rise...” (BGE 42) or not yet manifest. Moreover, since this philosopher and cultural practitioner is “...*necessarily* a man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow...” (BGE 212), putting them at odds with the values and practices of

⁴⁴² Dolan, Tompor, and Gallagher, “Detroit Rising.”

⁴⁴³ See, for example, Nietzsche, HH I 224.

their ‘today’, we should consider them to be *futurists*. They are not futurists in the sense discussed by Marinetti, uncritically enthralled by the ecstasy of speed and the technological. Rather, these philosophers of tomorrow, in the sense discussed by Nietzsche and embodied in the practices of the urban movements that mobilize the potencies of deindustrializing Windsor and Detroit are enthralled by the ecstasy of creativity, working in the medium of the common towards the expression of new forms of the common (uncommon expressions of the common). As expressed by Boggs regarding the movement in Detroit:

Detroit’s deindustrialization, devastation, and depopulation had turned the city into a wasteland, but it had also created the space and place where there was not only the necessity but also the possibility of creating a city based not on expanding production but on new values of sustainability and community. ... In its dying, Detroit could also be the birthplace of a new kind of city.”⁴⁴⁴

Nietzsche supplies us with a mechanism for “*A revaluation of all values...*” (TI “Foreword”) that first evaluates the values of today on the basis of health and human sustainability.

This is a process akin to that described by Richardson with regard to his account of drive freedom.⁴⁴⁵ Recall, Richardson argues that the drives and instincts should be held to their place within a political power structure so that some drives do not sometimes overpower others, but rather, that the organism “...keeps a consistent view of its interest, and runs its behavior with a steady aim.”⁴⁴⁶ He does, however, note “...we must imagine this structure as fluctuating rather drastically through time, as particular drives strengthen (perhaps

⁴⁴⁴ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 110.

⁴⁴⁵ See 2.2.

⁴⁴⁶ Richardson, “Nietzsche’s Freedoms,” 135.

stimulated by the situation) or weaken (perhaps when sated).⁴⁴⁷ Problematically, the account of drive freedom offered by both Richardson and Janaway advocates a stable and dogmatic character that would too powerfully resist the self-critical and adaptive subjectivity presupposed by self-overcoming. Since the particular drives, by Richardson's account, fluctuate drastically in terms of their relative power, the normative insistence upon a structure that would impose "...a unified, self-conscious, autonomous subject..."⁴⁴⁸ would of necessity subdue any collection of drives that would bring about such a unified field. For Nietzsche, this is the recipe for bad conscience. Nietzsche articulates: "Every instinct which does not vent itself externally *turns inwards* – this is what I call the *internalization* of man: it is at this point that what is later called the 'soul' first develops in man." (GM II 16) Subduing the drives in this manner would necessarily involve turning the drives against one another; Nietzsche quite clearly notes "...this is the formula for *decadence*..." (TI "The Problem of Socrates" 11)

In the second chapter, I argued that it is not necessary that a particular hierarchy of drives under a single dominant drive persists, but only that there exists some structure of drives in order to ensure that the drives do not fall into anarchy and opposition to one another. By this argument, a specific hierarchy of drives would persist as long as needed and then give way to the next necessary or expedient drive structure. This account offers a form of self-command to wield drives effectively given the dictates and demands of context. This interpretation of Nietzsche would allow for the entire organism to express a multitude of drives,

⁴⁴⁷ Richardson, "Nietzsche's Freedoms," 133-134.

⁴⁴⁸ Janaway, "Autonomy, Affect, and the Self," 58.

instincts, and capacities in a manner that is healthy, expedient and capable of responding to the trials of circumstance rather than exerting energy to dogmatically maintain its character (or the reigning political structure of the drives) in spite of the demands of a context of crisis.

As I have argued throughout, the practices of the activist collectives emerging as a movement in Detroit, collectives whose works were articulated in the preceding chapter as culturally rooted modes of political criticism engaged in re-visioning what the urban context can mean, did not emerge in a contextual vacuum, nor have they emerged in a power vacuum. Rather, they have taken root in the context of a waning power structure stubbornly and ineffectively attempting to maintain its stale character as a metropolis conceived in terms of the modernist and capitalist values enshrined in the notions of Detroit as ‘The Motor City’ or Windsor as ‘The Automotive Capital of Canada.’ Just as in the individual human being, we should identify and oppose aspects of our own character and our habitual stances that serve to inhibit, restrain, and mutilate drives that attempt to express themselves for the sake of our overall health and vitality. So too must we identify and oppose those stubborn cultural drives and city structures that restrain and stifle the emergence of lively networks of self-regulating engaged residents coming together in neighbourhoods and communities, thereby allowing these cities to become something new and humanly vital.

The ‘Hail Mary’ attempts to reimagine Windsor and Detroit by the media, politicians, or business leaders that tend to see the goal of generating vitality in

this urban center in terms a sudden transformation generated by the institution of massive development or economic plans fundamentally ignore, or worse still, stifle the tension and the basis of urban health and vitality in 'the common'. It is not only the official arms of urban power that resist, restrain, and stifle the emergence of lively networks of self-regulating engaged residents coming together in neighbourhoods and communities. In many cases it is the built environment itself that blocks these efforts. Sometimes it is disillusioned individuals holding fast to obsolete, hostile, and habitually held presuppositions about what it means to be urban - the residents of the communities themselves bound nostalgically to notions of the Windsor or Detroit that was – that frustrate the efforts of community collectives. In the following four sections, I will lay out in general terms the forces that stand in the way of urban experimentation and revaluing: 'Reconfigured Space/ Reconfigured Subjects', 'Abandoned Space/ Abandoned Subjects', 'Motor City is Burning', and 'The Rule of the Rich'.

4.1 Reconfigured Space/ Reconfigured Subjects

The landscape of Detroit is laid out for industry and not for people. For those who want to explore the challenges faced by urban environments in an age of suburbanization and sprawl, Detroit is a destination city. Detroit is indisputably the North American capital for ruin exploration, the site of abandoned structures such as churches, industrial buildings, schools, grand old homes, etc. Detroit is also a destination city in another respect. Given the scale of abandonment and the extensive footprint of the city (over 142 square miles, as LeDuff notes, a land

mass greater than the size of San Francisco and Manhattan combined⁴⁴⁹), if you arrive in Detroit you will find that the amenities and attracting factors of the city cluster in extremely disjointed pockets requiring extensive travel between them.



Figure 4.7 *Michigan Ave., Downtown. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.*

We should begin by understanding that historically Detroit was a city designed and retooled for large scale manufacturing by the technological hegemony brought about by Henry Ford and his moving assembly line. Ford himself invented nothing. Herron remarks on the underlying nature of Henry Ford's first automobile:

Figure and ground, and the power of names: The celebrated Model A wasn't really a Ford at all; it was a Dodge engine and chassis, underneath a Wilson carriage body, assembled piecemeal by workers paid with other men's money. But Henry had the sense to name it and to stamp his figure on the radiator, though even that, the famous Ford ellipse, was another man's doing as well.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹ LeDuff, *Detroit*, 4-5.

⁴⁵⁰ Jerry Herron, *AfterCulture*, 27.

Ford merely deployed a series of disparate processes in a synthetic manner. All of the processes of the assembly line were ready to hand, though the effects of this assemblage initially configured by Ford are not limited to the fast and cheap production of consumer objects or our manners of habitation of the physical urban landscape.

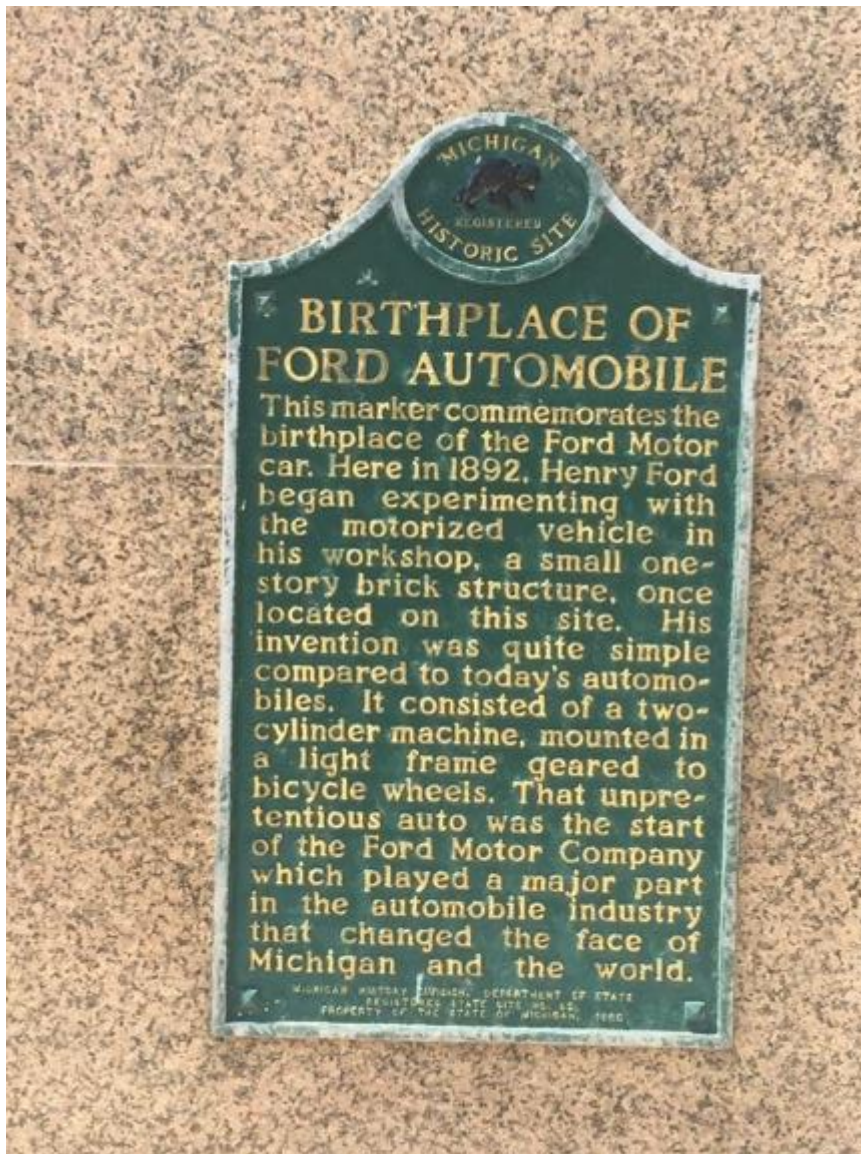


Figure 4.8 *Plaque, Michigan Building.* Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

The innovation produced by Ford was at its heart social, imposing a dual function upon workers: they must become both interchangeable parts within the assembly mechanism and consumers with the means and inclination to purchase the products produced by the mechanism.

Before this advent Detroit was the "...modest town of lumber barons and stove makers, brewers and locomotive engineers, cigar merchants and seed vendors..."⁴⁵¹ The idea itself was simple, though in sharp contrast to other contemporary modes of making where most manufactured products were made individually by hand either by a craftsman or team of craftsmen who produced each part of the product. Ford's moving assembly line capitalized on earlier manufacturing innovations from the 19th century which made interchangeable parts a practical reality (i.e., jigs, fixtures, machine tools, etc.). The conveyor belt that allowed the labourer to repetitively and efficiently place the same part over and over was imported from the slaughterhouse 'disassembly line'. In any case, the key features of this composite development were the inter-changeability of parts and the conveyor that allowed for greater repetitive motion (mechanization) of labour. The process was developed and fine-tuned by trial and error.

The transition from craft to this new mechanized mode of manufacturing was difficult on labourers. While from the perspective of management, replacement of skilled workers who know their craft from start to finish with unskilled workers who will work for a lower rate of pay may seem an economical bargain, Matthew Crawford, in his *Shop Class As Soul Craft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work*, notes that this transition was fraught with problems. He states:

⁴⁵¹ Jerry Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 32.

...it is hardly surprising that when Henry Ford introduced the assembly line in 1913, workers simply walked out. One of Ford's biographers wrote, "So great was labour's distaste for the new machine system that toward the close of 1913 every time the company wanted to add 100 men to its factory personnel, it was necessary to hire 963."⁴⁵²

Crawford's analysis of the value of work offers an account of the degradation of blue-collar work that centers on a tension between his accounts of autonomy and agency. He argues in a section of his book titled "To Be Master of One's Own Stuff" that there is:

...an ideology of freedom at the heart of consumerist material culture; a promise to disburden us from mental and bodily involvement with our own stuff so we can pursue ends we have freely chosen. Yet this disburdening gives us fewer occasions for the experience of direct responsibility.⁴⁵³

Today we live in the age of self-driving and self-parking cars, of faucets that rely upon motion sensors to activate and turn off on their own, and more generally a disposition to our technologies that imposes a freedom-from relationship that Crawford describes as "*autonomy*."⁴⁵⁴ Problematically, this 'ideology of freedom' divorces us from the "...cognitively rich world of work..."⁴⁵⁵ and breaks "...the connection between ... will and ... environment..."⁴⁵⁶ The notion of agency presented by Crawford in contrast to that of autonomy involves "Grime-under-the-fingernails, bodily involvement with the machines we use..."⁴⁵⁷ Agency is a sort of mastery that involves forms of self-reliance and spiritedness that, to the economic mind-set "...appears as a failure to be properly calculative..."⁴⁵⁸

Crawford forcefully notes:

⁴⁵² Matthew Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An inquiry into the value of work*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 41-42.

⁴⁵³ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 56.

⁴⁵⁴ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 63.

⁴⁵⁵ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 41.

⁴⁵⁶ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 55.

⁴⁵⁷ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 63.

⁴⁵⁸ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 55.

Economics recognizes only certain virtues, and not the most impressive ones at that. Spiritedness is an assertion of one's own dignity, and to fix one's own car is not merely to use up time, it is to have a different experience of time, of one's car, and of oneself.⁴⁵⁹

The assembly line introduced by Ford did not require an educated craftsman as worker, which in a sense opened up a world of economic and social possibilities to the unskilled and uneducated. Work on the line broke down tasks into "...minute instructions needed to perform some *part* of what is now a work process."⁴⁶⁰ This new form of manufacture requires little to no understanding of the larger processes that bring about the end product, and thus represents a form of autonomy from the overwhelming cognitive demands of a trade. In this process, "Scattered craft knowledge is concentrated in the hands of the employer, then doled out again to workers..."⁴⁶¹ This creates a paradigm of unskilled labour, since:

...the competitive labor-cost advantage now held by the more modern firm, which has aggressively separated planning from execution, compels the whole industry to follow the same route, and entire skilled trades disappear.⁴⁶²

Crawford argues that the assembly line offers "The clearest example of abstract labor...", which he defines as follows:

The *activity* of self-directed labor, conducted by the worker, is dissolved or abstracted into parts and then reconstituted as a *process* controlled by management – a labor sausage.⁴⁶³

In contrast, with more traditional modes of production the craftsman, as Crawford notes, knew what they were doing, being in command of all of the 'craft knowledge' necessary to bring about the product. He uses the example of *The Wheelwright's Shop* and its proprietor George Sturt to illustrate this difference:

⁴⁵⁹ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 55.

⁴⁶⁰ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 39.

⁴⁶¹ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 39.

⁴⁶² Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 40.

⁴⁶³ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 40.

"In Sturt's shop, working exclusively with hand tools, the skills required to build a wheel regress all the way to the selection of trees to fell for timber, the proper time for felling them, how to season them, and so forth."⁴⁶⁴ Craftsmanship of this sort is a type of mastery involving extensive knowledge, and the cognitive demands of tinkering, problem solving, and submission "...to things that have their own intractable ways."⁴⁶⁵

Crawford further illustrates with the example of a musician in a passage reminiscent of Nietzsche's account of the necessity encountered as an expression of the 'freedom of will' of the artist (BGE 213).⁴⁶⁶

The musician's power of expression is founded upon a prior obedience; her musical agency is built up from an ongoing submission. To what? To her teacher perhaps, but this is incidental rather than primary – there is such a thing as the self-taught musician. Her obedience rather is to the mechanical realities of her instrument, which in turn answer to certain natural necessities of music that can be expressed mathematically. ... These facts do not arise from the human will, and there is no altering them. I believe the example of the musician sheds light on the basic character of human agency, namely, that it arises only within concrete limits that are not of our making.⁴⁶⁷

The creativity, self-reliance, and mastery involved with the craftsmanship described by Crawford is, by his estimation incompatible and at a basic level "...at odds with the ontology of consumerism, which seems to demand a different conception of reality."⁴⁶⁸

We can readily see why this transition in modes of production was so distasteful to its newly inducted labourers. On the assembly line it was no longer necessary for workers of the modern mechanized forms of production to have access to the cognitive richness of craft. The horizon of assembly line work is

⁴⁶⁴ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 41.

⁴⁶⁵ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 65.

⁴⁶⁶ See pp 261-262 above.

⁴⁶⁷ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 64. See also, BGE 213.

⁴⁶⁸ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 65.

necessarily small, limited to largely unreflective repetition of the same motions to produce an isolated task as part of the larger machine. It is this integration into the mechanized process – the blending of human and non-human – that Diego Rivera captured so well, though somewhat heroically and romantically, in his mural *Detroit Industry*, which is housed at the Detroit Institute of the Arts. This work is a fresco cycle intended as a tribute to the city's manufacturing base and labour force in the 1930's. Rivera believed that art belonged to public walls rather than private galleries. The mural itself arises from a series of preliminary sketches of industrial plants depicting accurate renderings of machinery in motion, workers heroically integrated into the motions of the machinery. During production of the twenty seven panel work, Rivera continued his studies of the manufacturing process at the Rouge Ford plant. Rivera depicts clearly a harmonious relation to nature and also incorporates representations of indigenous peoples of the Americas into this work. This work depicts both labourers and elements management (depicted in clean suits wearing white collars) in relation to nature which places this work within social, economic, and political context. Rivera's work does take a position, intentionally heroically representing workers engaged with the toil of production, standing fundamentally separate from the clean suited and aloof management figures. A series of such oppositional dyads dominate the overall mural: the depiction of the manufacturing technology stands in sharp contrast to nature; vaccination and chemical warfare, on one side of the room rubber being taken from tropical trees, on the other side is the Detroit skyline, etc. This mural, reportedly by Rivera's estimation, the best

of his works, depicts the values of manufacturing culture as being fundamentally at odds with nature while depicting the worker being sacrificed to the god of American manufacturing.

The vision imposed by Ford and the advent of his assembly assemblage was meant to capture and convert the productive (and reproductive) potential of his workers by creating a culture that would reconfigure a workforce of craftsmen into productive yet unskilled and unreflective worker/consumer bodies. Today in manufacturing cities it is common to meet assembly workers who do not even know what it is they are engaged with manufacturing, themselves being isolated to one part of the greater line, having only a relationship with nondescript parts and their pay check. It was only through the introduction of Ford's *Five Dollar Day* that Ford was able to retain his workers. Of these workers, now anxious to keep their jobs, Crawford further notes:

These anxious workers were more productive. Indeed, Ford himself later recognized his wage increase as "one of the finest cost-cutting moves we ever made," as he was able to double, and then triple, the rate at which cars were assembled by simply speeding up the conveyors. By doing so he destroyed his competitors, and thereby destroyed the possibility of an alternative way of working.⁴⁶⁹

Assembly workers are simply another set of interchangeable and standardized parts in the manufacturing process. This stands in sharp contrast to the agency of a skilled and active human engagement valorized by Crawford.

Along with this transition to technology came widespread and necessary infrastructural demands and far reaching consequences for our modes of habitation (i.e., how we live and where we live). Aside from the obvious necessity of building roads and freeways to support the product of these

⁴⁶⁹ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 42.

manufacturing plants, the layout of the city of Detroit itself evolved to support this new form of mechanized labour. In fact, the very layout of Detroit and its outlying districts were engineered to mirror the modular layout of the factory floor.

Charles Waldheim notes of Detroit:

While flexibility, mobility, and speed made Detroit an international model for industrial urbanism, those very qualities rendered the city disposable. Traditional models of dense urban arrangement were quite literally abandoned in favour of escalating profits, accelerating accumulation and a culture of consumption. This of course was the genius of Ford's conception: a culture that consumes the products of its own labour while consistently creating a surplus of demand ensuring a nomadic, operational, and ceaselessly reiterated model of ex-urban arrangement. That ongoing provisional work of rearrangement is the very model of American urbanism that Detroit offers.⁴⁷⁰

In a sense, it should come as no surprise that the layout of our cities should reflect our modes of subsistence. What is intriguing, though, is that the products of the moving assembly line seem to be manifold. This new form of industrial urbanism seems to refute the traditional high-density models of city layout while providing the means for a meaningful suburban move with its product: the automobile. Previous to the advent of the moving assembly line, both Windsor and Detroit were laid out in high-density parished neighbourhoods. Within walking distance from your home you would find streets thickly lined with all of the amenities needed to serve the household. Aside from the occasional shopping trip to the downtown core, one hardly had to leave one's neighbourhood. With the moving assembly line, like the now mobile and interchangeable parts which come together to produce the automobile, the automobile provides a drive to a similar sort of mobility and interchangeability of workers and residents. It is no surprise that a new nomadic and mobile form of subjectivity like that championed by Richard Florida and decried by Jacobs

⁴⁷⁰ Charles Waldheim, "Motor City," 56.

should emerge as a further product of this process. This subjectivity functions much like the numerically accounted for interchangeable parts which made this mode of production possible in the first place, a subjectivity further reinforced by a physically built environment that seems "...contrived to break the connection between ... will and ...environment."⁴⁷¹ Waldheim further notes:

Ford's famous Five-dollar day and five-day workweek were quite calculated levers intended to fuel the consumption of mass products by the working classes themselves. The volatile concentration of diverse populations of labourers in dense urban centers was among the factors that led Ford to begin decentralizing production as early as the 1920's. The combination of decentralized pools of workers each with sufficient income to consume the products of their own labours produced a new economic paradigm in the 20th century and also helped fuel the rapid depopulation of post-industrial urban centers in postwar America.⁴⁷²

The forces that were at work inside and outside the plant were productive of both automobiles and a particular kind of urban layout. Ford's Five dollar day, five day week was intended to stabilize his workforce long enough to habituate his workers to the new demands of the moving assembly line. The subjectivity fostered by these automotive plants, then, is a new class of consumers habituated to be distant from their objects, with mobile and nomadic lives made possible by automobiles, living in increasingly decentralized sub-urban clusters.

Though this nomadic and mobile consumer subjectivity was at root hostile to the configurations of urban life, urban manufacturing centers like Windsor and Detroit persisted, oscillating between economic booms and busts while remaining productive of both material consumer goods and the pedagogical reconfiguration of worker/ consumer subjectivities. As we saw with the argument presented by

⁴⁷¹ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 55. In this reference Crawford merely illustrates the frustration of the 'spirited' who wishes to 'be master of one's own stuff' experiences in a public bathroom with a motion sensor operated faucet. It is a simple matter to expand the inference to a general claim about a built environment modeled after the factory floor.

⁴⁷² Charles Waldheim, "Motor City," 58.

Herron regarding Hudson's department store, the institutions of the city were designed to support the pedagogical configuration of subjectivity to this industrial worker/ consumer lifestyle.



Figure 4.9 *Boggs School*. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Public educational institutions have traditionally reinforced this configuration of subjectivity as well, prompting Grace Lee Boggs to establish the Boggs Educational Center in order to challenge what she calls 'the factory model of education.' She writes:

At the core of the problem is an obsolete factory model of schooling that sorts, tracks, tests, and rejects or certifies working-class children as if they were products on an assembly line. The purpose of education ...cannot be only to increase the earning power of the individual or to supply workers for the ever-changing slots of the corporate machine. Children need to be given a sense of the "unique capacity of human beings to shape and create reality in accordance with conscious purposes and plans."⁴⁷³

⁴⁷³ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 137.

In the place of what she considers an antiquated model for education, she proposed "...a horizontal teaching/ learning process at the center of a community-building model of education"⁴⁷⁴ that would direct students toward engagement with building their neighbourhoods.



Figure 4.10 Play Space, Boggs School. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Central to the model for education proposed by Boggs is the development of a notion of lived social responsibility established by engaging children in community-building activities like:

...taking responsibility for maintaining neighbourhood streets, planting community gardens, recycling waste, rehabbing houses, creating healthier school lunches, visiting and doing errands for the elderly, organizing neighborhood festivals, and painting public murals!⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁴ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 155.

⁴⁷⁵ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 158.

Rather than cloistering children within the walls of educational institutions for twelve years and more, education programs that center around these activities, Boggs insists, would educate children with practical skills that allow them to participate in the real world while fostering dispositions to their cities and neighbourhoods. She continues:

This is the fastest way to motivate all our children to learn and at the same time turn our communities, almost overnight, into lively neighborhoods where crime is going down because hope is going up. It is something needed not only by children in cities such as Detroit but in suburbs and exurbs like Littleton, Colorado – site of the Columbine High School massacre.⁴⁷⁶

Through the establishing of a sense of community centered agency, such educational systems would challenge the naive cyclical understanding of history that, while beginning to lose its lustre, still dominates the cultural mindset within deindustrializing Windsor and Detroit.

While residents still subscribe to a naive cyclical understanding of history governed by these booms and busts, especially in Detroit, each successive boom (as we noted in the introduction⁴⁷⁷) seemed less impressive, while each bust seemed more catastrophic. LeDuff reflects:

...there is the thought that Detroit was simply a boomtown that went bust, a city that began to fall apart the minute Henry Ford began to build it. The car made Detroit and the car unmade Detroit. Detroit was built in some ways to be disposable. The auto industry allowed for sprawl. It allowed man to escape the smoldering city with its grubby factory and steaming smokestacks.⁴⁷⁸

Assembly plants left the city, initially for the suburbs and eventually, subject to the forces of globalization, to countries with cheaper labour and fewer laws to restrain the practices of the corporations. Educated as workers, we are given to understand ourselves as helpless survivors of the economic functions of the

⁴⁷⁶ Boggs, *The Next American Revolution*, 158.

⁴⁷⁷ See p. 1-3 above.

⁴⁷⁸ LeDuff, *Detroit*, 80-81.

industries that sustain us. We must conform to their needs and are given to understand ourselves as passive receptacles for the values and practices of our age. Boggs argues that, rather than being educated to be submissive efficient causes (machine parts) in an industrial process whose function we are not in a position to comprehend; education should instead focus upon training our children to become the leaders and agents of change that will shape the political and urban landscapes of tomorrow.

The argument that the Boggs Educational Center represents is fundamentally qualitative, but is often criticized on the grounds of sufficiency. The Boggs Center educates a relatively small number of Detroiters which, given the massive problems faced by the Detroit Public School Board, barely seems to scratch the surface of the educational crisis. Detroit Public Schools are notoriously underfunded, undersupplied, and many of the school buildings themselves are in a state of disrepair with broken classroom windows, mould, and other safety hazards. Recall, LeDuff accurately depicts the condition of the school system, when he characterizes Detroit as "...the country's illiteracy and dropout capital, where children must leave their books at school and bring toilet paper from home."⁴⁷⁹ Again, as noted by Taylor, the scale of the problems faced by modern industrial-technological society themselves can have a dispiriting effect. Once the "...lateral associations..." that were the vehicles for political action have broken down, "...the individual citizen is left alone in the face of the vast bureaucratic state and feels, correctly, powerless. This demotivates the

⁴⁷⁹ LeDuff, *Detroit*, 5.

citizen even further, and the vicious cycle of soft despotism is joined.”⁴⁸⁰ The educational efforts championed and practiced by Boggs and the Boggs Educational Center, however, should not be read as a panacea to the institutional ills of the Detroit Public School system, complete and sufficient in every way. As a performed critique that issues a proposal inviting us to explore new social and educational potencies, the experimental efforts of the Boggs School represent not an incomplete and insufficient solution, but a complete critical proposal. Unfortunately, given the challenges already faced by the public schools system in Detroit it seems unlikely that the radical change in curriculum and disposition proposed by Boggs will be implemented in any substantial way.

4.2 Abandoned Space/ Abandoned Subjects

Today in the context of deindustrializing Windsor and Detroit, much of the material and human detritus of the manufacturing process remains in place as if to signify a hasty abandonment of the landscape. In an episode of *Parts Unknown*, an American travel and food show, host Anthony Bourdain is guided by LeDuff through the culinary scene in Detroit.⁴⁸¹ In a brief refrain while touring one of the mostly abandoned neighbourhoods in Detroit, LeDuff directs the attention of Bourdain to what he calls ‘ghost gardens.’ ‘Ghost gardens’ are plots of perennials planted around the now demolished homes of the formerly working class residents. These residents are now long gone, though their garden plots continue to signify their absence. While these ‘ghost gardens’ are a discrete

⁴⁸⁰ Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 10.

⁴⁸¹ See: “Anthony Bourdain, Parts Unknown: Detroit, Season 2, Episode 8,” *CNN*, November 10, 2013, Accessed August 22, 2016. <http://www.cnn.com/video/shows/anthony-bourdain-parts-unknown/season-2/detroit/>.

signification of absence, the scale of the overall landscape of abandonment in many areas of Detroit – massive schools now closed, boarded up stores, churches, warehouses, block after block of residential areas given over to urban prairie, etc. – makes up a context that is over-full with emptiness; not empty per se, but littered with the leavings of abandoned ways of life. There is lots of stuff, material clutter, in the way of attempts to re-imagine Detroit.



Figure 4.10 *Jefferson Ave. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.*

Hercher, in a section of his *Guide* called “Patrimony of the Unlost”⁴⁸² addresses ‘unreal’ appropriations of this material detritus. In the introduction of this section he reflects:

With their caretakers frequently preoccupied with the immediate tasks of survival, objects in the city of unreal estate are often left behind, disowned or abandoned. Precisely as such, however, these objects offer themselves for repossession, for becoming strange in new hands.

Yet it’s not only objects that are lost in the city of unreal estate, but also identities, ambitions and plans of action; the city alienates both objects from subjects and subjects from themselves. Thus the finders of lost objects can also, as it is said, “find themselves.” Accumulating and arranging castoffs and discards, they become caretakers, curators, or outsider artists, claiming the unreal estate to *archive* and arrange unreal estate’s particular material culture.⁴⁸³

Again, this passage reflects a mobilized form of unreal estate – one intentionally curated and arranged by ‘caretakers’ and ‘outsider artists’. As interesting and vital as these ‘outsider’ projects may be, it is important to linger momentarily upon a greater sense of unreality that generates the impression of Detroit as “...the city of unreal estate...”⁴⁸⁴ The assemblage of the city itself, having been abandoned by nearly two thirds of its population and most of the associated businesses and institutions becomes a sort of unintended monument to the absent. In Detroit generally, but even in the developed area of Midtown, it remains difficult to find a vista that doesn’t hold an abandoned or burned out home, an empty lot containing the crumbling foundation of a formerly useful structure, or a boarded up and graffiti covered store front. Almost every street corner discloses absence, pregnant with the traces of abandoned lives.

⁴⁸² Hercsher, *Guide*, 272-289.

⁴⁸³ Herscher, *Guide*, 272.

⁴⁸⁴ Herscher, *Guide*, 272.



Figure 4.11 *East End Neighbourhood*. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

Again, as Herscher notes, "...the city alienates both objects from subjects and subjects from themselves..."⁴⁸⁵ generating and continually reinforcing the overall sense that not only the material leavings, but the residents of Detroit are dispossessed, surplus, extra, and unwanted. Potentially there is a heroism that

⁴⁸⁵ Herscher, *Guide*, 272.

can arise in the face of this overall sense – a heroism of a particularly American stripe, and one that recalls the lyrics to the American national anthem.



Figure 4.12 'Detroit -VS- Everybody,' Eastern Market 1. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Detroiters remain, even after all that has happened in this city, giving proof through the night that their flag is still there. This is particularly Nietzschean.

Recall the passage from the *Untimely Meditations* cited in the first chapter which

describes the sense of place generated by antiquarian history: “Here we lived, he says to himself, for here we are living; and here we shall live, for we are tough and not to be ruined overnight.” (UM II 3) As pointed out by my commentator for a recent conference paper, there exists a popular T-shirt that reads “Detroit –VS- Everybody” that illustrates this heroism well. Speaking from experience, however, the affects generated by the blight that seemed to haunt my every turn during my extended stay in Detroit – from massive institutional structures (churches, warehouses, schools, etc.) to smaller residential or commercial structures –was simply exhausting and depressive.



Figure 4.13 *Michigan Central Station, Rear View.* Detroit, MI. October 30, 2009. Photo Credit: Jennifer Willet.

Of these abandoned landmarks the crown jewel is indisputably the Michigan Central Station (the Michigan Depot), although this massive monument to the former might and glory of Detroit is far from alone. Massive abandoned and deteriorating structures of this sort preserve and reinforce materially the historical identity of Detroit as the industrial heart of an empire. In this respect, such material leavings of past eras enforce an excess of Nietzsche's antiquarian history upon the culture of Detroit. Antiquarian history only knows how to preserve and, when taken to excess, this preservation stifles life instead of furthering life. Given both the scale and beauty of the architecture of these buildings there exists a strong preservationist mentality that can easily be illustrated by the graffiti scrawled across the face of Michigan Central Station which reads "Save Our Depot". This impulse – an impulse that was intended as a feature of the heroic and monumental architecture employed as part of the design of these buildings - is also applied to buildings like the historic Packard Plant and Book Depository. In reality hopes to preserve, venerate, and revive the sense of power produced by acting as the industrial heart of an empire ('The Arsenal of Democracy') are futile, and problematically this impulse only serves to heighten the pain of loss and stifle attempts to imagine a new paradigm for the city. Nietzsche, again applying a metaphor of the relationship of a tree to its roots, states of antiquarian history:

When the senses of a people harden in this fashion, when the study of history serves the life of the past in such a way that it undermines continuing and especially higher life, when the historical sense no longer conserves life but mummifies it, then the tree gradually dies unnaturally from the top downwards to the roots – and in the end the roots themselves usually perish too. (UM II 3)

The material structures, standing as a perpetual reminder of the former might and glory of industrialized Detroit at once materially and spiritually block attempts to revalue and re-spirit the city. The preservationist instinct, an instinct that Herron would characterize as resting in a misguided nostalgia, is only heightened by a lack of city funds for the demolition of unused properties and, as we shall see below, the machinations of the reigning Detroit oligarchs.

As it stands, as a result of the industrial heritage of the city, travel within Detroit is quite complicated. The transit network in Detroit is notoriously underfunded and intermittently useful. Roads are laid out in a manner that encourages the efficient exit of manufactured goods and workers from these cities rather than travel within them. Small pockets of urban activism dot many of the neighbourhoods in Detroit, although they are dwarfed and disjointed by abandonment so extensive that former neighbourhoods have given way to urban prairie. This extreme abandonment would pose as large a problem for the design prescriptions necessary to produce modes of ethical association presented by Jacobs as did the factory floor model employed by Ford. Many of the leavings of a disposable manufacturing city (i.e., six lane roads, the husks of abandoned manufacturing plants, soil pollution resulting from heavy metals, etc.) are still present, although they fester in a state of abject disuse leaving gaping corridors of the city, the former neighbourhoods for residents whose jobs have moved on, empty to fallow in abandonment. Nevertheless, the values associated with industrial urbanism in many ways persist.

It is presupposed that you should have an automobile to traverse the span of this space.⁴⁸⁶ In Windsor as well, bus service is quite limited and mostly used by the disadvantaged of the city. In the context of an automotive town, it is seen to be a defect to ride public transit, since every individual 'should' (read as a strongly perceived normative requirement) own and operate an automobile. Both the manufacturing infrastructure and the manufactured sensibilities with nostalgic fidelity to the automotive industry remain in an eerie fashion expressive of an excess of monumental history. A development tendency that has become particularly prevalent in Windsor of late is the push towards moving commercial and health services further away from the city core, concentrating these services at the outskirts of the city on land formerly zoned for agricultural purposes. While the older residential developments in the core of Windsor are still fairly densely populated, commercial vacancy within the city core has steadily risen in recent years. This increases reliance on private automobiles.

Windsor was traditionally a 'lunch bucket' town, where workers at the factory would walk to work and, on their way home from the factories, would shop for their sustenance needs at the local shops. The neighbourhood known as 'Ford City', with the Ford Motor Company assembly plant acting as its former nexus at the corner of Drouillard Road and Riverside Drive, was laid out in this manner, surrounded by medium to high density housing with shops lining Drouillard Road. This plant was the first footprint of Ford Motor Company in

⁴⁸⁶ Taylor decries this trend in urban design as a feature of instrumental reason in his *Malaise of Modernity*: "„the whole design of some modern cities makes it hard to function without a car, particularly where public transport has been eroded in favour of the private automobile." (Taylor, *The Malaise of Modernity*, 9.)

Canada which employed 14000 workers when the population of Windsor was barely above 100000 residents.



Figure 4.14 *Weathered 'Welcome to Ford City' Mural. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016.*
Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

This was the site of the historic 99 day 1945 Ford Strike where the workers fought for unionization, setting up a blockade around the plant. At the conclusion of this strike the Rand Formula was created where workers would have to pay union dues for having a union in their workplaces. This strike set the standard for all unionization in Canada. Ford closed the Riverside Drive plant, moving production from Windsor to Oakville in 1953, leaving thousands unemployed. Only the casting and engine plants remained. This decimated Drouillard Road and the surrounding community, where today most of the commercial development sits vacant. The low property values in this region, which is

surrounded by a number of vacant or semi-vacant industrial sites, has built a city district that is "...custom made for easy crime..."⁴⁸⁷

The population of Windsor, while not shrinking like that of Detroit, is static with no predictions for growth in the next two decades. The city footprint, however, at the behest of commercial and residential developers, continues to grow in a manner that leaves much of the commercial space within the city vacant. The city policy of offering tax rebates for vacant property exacerbates this trend, making it economically beneficial to leave a property vacant rather than engaging in the necessary renovations to existing properties that would make filling the vacancy possible.⁴⁸⁸ The effects of this trend exacerbated by policies like these tend to move commercial and city services to the outskirts of the city where developers can build on cheaply purchased greenfield land in a manner that hollows out the city core. In Detroit the case is far more extreme, with most formerly industrial, commercial and residential space in a state of abject disuse or being cannibalized for scrap. The landscape is punctuated by abandoned lots and copious numbers of unmaintained parks with grass that frequently grows past your waist.

⁴⁸⁷ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 40.

⁴⁸⁸ "Tax Rebates and Relief," *City of Windsor*, Accessed April 16, 2016.

<http://www.citywindsor.ca/cityhall/Taxes--and-Assessment-/Pages/Tax-Rebates-and-Relief.aspx>. "Vacancy Rebates are available for Commercial and Industrial Buildings under the *Municipal Act*, Section 364 and *Ontario Regulation 325/01*.

Eligibility:

Category 1, Buildings that are Entirely Vacant: A whole commercial or industrial building will be eligible for a rebate if the entire building was unused for at least 90 consecutive days.

Category 2, Buildings that are Partially Vacant: A suite or unit in a commercial building will be eligible for a rebate if, for at least 90 consecutive days, it was unused and clearly delineated or physically separate from the used portions of the building; and is either capable of being leased for immediate occupation, or is undergoing, or is in need of repairs or renovations that prevented it from being available for leases for immediate occupation; or is unfit for occupation. A portion of an industrial building will be eligible for a rebate if, for at least 90 consecutive days, it was unused and clearly delineated or physically separated from the used portions for the building."

It is only natural that these regions should draw inspiration from their past accomplishments, although that inspiration idealizes and falsifies history. We find in both Windsor and Detroit values and practices that glorify the automotive industry and the mobility afforded by the automobile with little or no understanding of the hostility of these values and practices to cities. Nonetheless, Windsorites and Detroiters (specifically ‘hipsters’) yearn nostalgically for a return to urban configurations that they mistakenly associate with the economic vitality brought about by these industries. Nietzsche notes the deceptiveness and falsification of monumental history:

Monumental history deceives by analogies: with seductive similarities it inspires the courageous to foolhardiness and the inspired to fanaticism; and when we go on to think of this kind of history in the hands and heads of gifted egoists and visionary scoundrels, then we see empires destroyed, princes murdered, wars and revolutions launched and the number of ‘effects in themselves,’ that is to say, effects without sufficient cause, again augmented. (UM II 2)

This nostalgia for a return to our cities and the trenchant normative support of the ideals of the auto industry, which is deceptively drawn in contrast to suburban life, in no way represents a return to the battlements of old or the reestablishment of democracy’s arsenal. With regard to this nostalgia, applied to Hudson’s department store and Michigan Central Station, Herron argues:

People in Detroit still talk about Hudson’s as a retail institution, but they give little thought to the actual old building, which became a gutted, vandalized wreck, and no less irrelevant than Michigan Central Station. Both are rightly understood as monuments for a disappeared history: the train station because nobody here seems to bother much about the ruin that still remains; Hudson’s because everybody claims to remember so fondly the building that’s no longer there. But what people remember is not exactly historical reality; instead, the memory of Hudson’s has become a kind of screen upon which we can replay an idealized past — a past without any of the problems that made the utopian promise of suburbia seem worth abandoning the city to fulfill.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁹ Jerry Herron, “The Forgetting Machine.”

The nostalgic idealization simply points to a thriving urban core and the trappings of a metropolis – grand skyscrapers and public buildings, large department stores, neighbourhoods where we all lived together once upon a time – an economic powerhouse at the heart of an industrial empire. It is, however, an appeal to the monument of an urban ideal that fails to reflect any of the shortcomings or problems of the urban reality to which the ideal aspires – shortcomings and problems structural to the automobile and industrial urbanism. This trenchant acceptance of the ideals of industrial urbanism along with the material detritus left by declining automotive manufacture and declining population act as major obstacles to ongoing attempts to radically reimagine ways to inhabit cities.

Recall, Jacobs advocates three main city design qualities for successful city neighbourhoods, each of which is intended to address two potent reflections about the nature of street and sidewalk space – spaces that generate most profoundly our sense of a city. Given our reflections on the oscillation between our sense of place and our sense of ourselves from Nietzsche, our sense of a city in turn generates the forms of subjectivity that we perform and exhibit.

Jacobs reflects:

...that the public peace – the sidewalk and street peace – of cities is not kept primarily by the police, necessary as police are. It is kept primarily by an intricate, almost unconscious, network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves, and enforced by the people themselves.⁴⁹⁰

Populated areas must self-govern in order to bring about a sense of place that puts residents and visitors alike at ease. She continues: “The second thing to

⁴⁹⁰ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 40.

understand is that the problem of insecurity cannot be solved by spreading people out more thinly, trading the characteristics of cities for the characteristics of suburbs.”⁴⁹¹ Excessive population density is not the issue, as should be obvious from the case of the now thinly populated Detroit. Recall, Jacobs, on the basis of her understanding of the “...intricate... network of voluntary controls and standards among the people themselves...”:⁴⁹² introduces three design prescriptions meant to bolster and sustain this intricate network. These were: demarcation between public and private space in order to avoid suburban ambiguity, eyes on the street, and continuous use.⁴⁹³

While these city design qualities aim at fostering forms of active engagement with one’s surroundings in order that the city street can handle strangers, the low population density in most areas of Detroit works against these prescriptions on almost every front. With respect to the first quality, the demarcation between public and private space it becomes problematic given the number of abandoned properties left unsecured and left to nature, generating the forms of ambiguous or atopic space that Jacobs disparages. In many cases these lots are owned by the city or county and there simply are not enough resources to maintain these spaces, let alone enough to maintain the official city parks and recreation facilities. Further, given the extremely low property values in Detroit, speculators have purchased a number of these lots with no intention of developing them. The standing joke of the five hundred dollar Detroit home has led a number of speculators to invest in numerous properties from the Wayne

⁴⁹¹ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 40.

⁴⁹² Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 40.

⁴⁹³ See Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 44-45. Discussed in 1.1 above.

County Foreclosure auction. Many of these investors buy these properties from afar (“...from California to China...”⁴⁹⁴) intending to rent out these properties and wait for property values to increase. Unfortunately these investments have a stifling effect on neighbourhoods.

Many of those who succumb to the lure of cheap investment property simply do not understand the state of the properties that they are buying. A 2013 article for *Business Insider* (“This Is for Everyone Who’s Thinking of Buying One of Those \$500 Homes In Detroit”) notes of these properties:

Nearly all of them have mold [sic.], require all new electrical, plumbing, ductwork, drywall, many times a roof, all new windows, doors, cabinets. Basically everything. Anything that can be taken and sold, has been.”⁴⁹⁵

Typically thousands of dollars of investment is required to bring these properties up to habitable status, that in addition to remittance for all back taxes on the property. This is only the first hurdle. Given the avid underground scrapper economy in Detroit, renovating these homes can also prove difficult. The same article notes:

You almost need to pay someone to sleep on an air mattress in the house while you are working and move in immediately upon completion,” he said. “If these houses sit, people WILL break into them. You put in a new toilet, bathtub, and vanity...that night people come in and rip it all out. A business partner of mine had a house broken into 5 times over the last couple of months... It is hard out there, and people are trying to survive.”⁴⁹⁶

Given these difficulties, many would-be investors who have purchased these cheap properties simply let them lie fallow due to a lack of either funds or commitment. It is not uncommon to see a single individual buy dozens of homes

⁴⁹⁴ Nick Carey, “Cheap Detroit Houses Scooped Up By Investors Can Be Costly For Communities, Bad News For Buyers,” *Huffington Post*, July 3, 2013, Accessed April 15, 2016.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/03/cheap-detroit-houses_n_3538213.html.

⁴⁹⁵ Rob Wile, “This Is For Everyone Who’s Thinking Of Buying One Of Those \$500 Homes In Detroit,” *Business Insider*, July 23, 2013, Accessed April 15, 2016.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/buying-cheap-property-in-detroit-2013-7>.

⁴⁹⁶ Rob Wile, “This Is For Everyone.”

at auction only to have those same homes remain in a state of disrepair to be foreclosed upon again over the next few years. These properties which change hands on paper with little or no material change to the properties themselves remain abandoned, dominating the landscape of the neighbourhood. They are not publically maintained, nor are they in any practical sense privately maintained. Most of them do not belong in any productive way to the 'common'. The failure of all three categories employed by Hardt and Negri should add to our sense of the 'unreality' of these spaces in Detroit – an 'unreality' that further heightens the ambiguity disparaged by Jacobs.

Jacobs advocates city design qualities that foster the opportunity and desire for shared engagement with the city's streets and sidewalks. Buildings and city streets should be architecturally disposed to streets and sidewalks in a way that promotes forms of informal community stewardship of the streets. This is an interesting prescription that has been taken to heart by a number of community organizations in Detroit who, through their activities, festivals, and squatter practices, attempt to activate disused properties in their neighbourhoods. In the preceding chapter we briefly examined the tactical habitation deployed by Neighbours Building Brightmoor, an organization on the Northwest side of Detroit. Here, to illustrate, we will turn to an ongoing East side artist project by Artist Tyree Guyton.

Guyton's Heidelberg project represents a response to both the abandonment and de-industrialization of Detroit. Guyton has transformed his childhood neighbourhood, which he found in 1985 upon returning home to be

largely a broken neighbourhood with problems with drugs, prostitution and the like, into a work of art.



Figure 4.15 Heidelberg Project Vehicle. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Herron recounts the historical context in which this project emerged:

Guyton was born in 1955 and grew up in a house on Heidelberg Street, which by the 1980's had gone the way of many streets in Detroit. What had once been an ethnic, working-class neighborhood became a mostly African-American neighborhood on which depopulation, poverty, and finally crack took its toll. The street was in poor condition, with abandoned houses being used by addicts, dealers, and prostitutes; it was dangerous to walk here, day or night.⁴⁹⁷

It now seems odd that Herron would reflect upon the danger of walking up and down Heidelberg Street. This street, though surrounded by neighbourhoods that have come to be seen as typically dangerous in Detroit, now exudes a surreal sense of safety and security. Through the artists' efforts, the street-scape has become an eerie yet inviting open-air sculpture garden composed of painted

⁴⁹⁷ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 198.

polka-dots and found objects left by the residential and industrial abandonment of Detroit.



Figure 4.16 Heidelberg Project, Street. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Effectively, the objects that make up the Heidelberg Project are the garbage left behind by deindustrialization and suburban flight. The landscape is dominated by houses turned artist projects described by Herron as ensembles that:

...literally vomit forth the physical elements of domestic history; furniture, dolls, television sets, signs, toilets, enema bottles, beds, tires, baby buggies come cascading out doors and windows and through holes in the roof, flowing down the outside walls and collecting in great heaps on the lawn, so that the whole looks like some sort of man-made lava flow. The magma of discarded lives: these visible tokens of a humiliated history.⁴⁹⁸

Wendy Walters, in her “Turning the Neighborhood Inside Out: Imagining a New Detroit in Tyree Guyton’s Heidelberg Project” recounts an interview with Guyton, who describes the initial thrust of this project “...as protest art against the decline

⁴⁹⁸ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 199.

of his eastside Detroit neighborhood.”⁴⁹⁹ Effectively, the Heidelberg Project expands out into zones of disuse, appropriating that which has been discarded, inhabiting that which has been abandoned.



Figure 4.17 Heidelberg Project Ark. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Herron continues:

He [Guyton] has done for the poor what conversion does for the middle class. Like the little boutiques and restaurants that occupy the formerly domestic areas of historic interiors, Guyton’s “Project” similarly converts private space to public spectacle. But the results in his case are not so much reassuring as they are disturbing. It is impossible to look at the Heidelberg Project and not imagine that something terrible has happened to cause this explosion of physical deformity. And of course something has. Perhaps the most visible witness to this fact is the profusion of dolls, which are both incorporated in the design of the houses, and also nailed up in trees, or used as parts of free-standing sculptures. But invariably, the dolls are mangled and mutilated, figural representatives of the once desirable, and now humiliated objects that surround them: their arms missing, or their heads; they are hung upside down as if victims of some dreadful sacrifice. To visit Tyree’s neighborhood is to visit the body specifically as dismembered witness to the humiliations of historical interrogation.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁹ Wendy Walters, “Turning the Neighborhood Inside Out: Imagining a New Detroit in Tyree Guyton’s Heidelberg Project,” *TDR: The Drama Review*, 45.1 (2001), 64.

⁵⁰⁰ Herron, *AfterCulture*, 199.

Though the edifice of the Heidelberg Project clearly does not strike the aesthetic fancy of Herron, his reflections should bring to mind the third design feature advocated by Jacobs:

...the sidewalk must have users on it fairly continuously, both to add to the number of effective eyes on the street and to induce the people in buildings along the street to watch the sidewalks in sufficient numbers.”⁵⁰¹



Figure 4.18 *Heldleberg Project 'Unleaded Regular.'* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

By Herron's estimation, what Guyton has done by converting "...private space to public spectacle..."⁵⁰² serves to activate the space in his neighbourhood artistically, effectively adding to the "...number of effective eyes on the

⁵⁰¹ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 45.

⁵⁰² Herron, *AfterCulture*, 199.

street...”⁵⁰³ This accounts for the palpable sense of safety generated by the project – safety generated by eyes directed to the spectacle of the project - when compared to neighbourhoods eight or ten blocks away that lack the foot traffic and activity. Our discussion of the cultural activities of tactical habitation in the Brightmoor neighbourhood essentially produces the same effect, but through resident festivals and not through the establishment of an outdoor sculpture gallery of international repute.⁵⁰⁴

The Heidelberg Project is regularly staffed by Guyton himself, a host of volunteers, children’s groups, and spectators. The project has become a regular stop for tour buses and, because of the now international attention garnered by the artist’s project, it is a regular pilgrimage for art students and historians alike. Guyton plays the role of artist-eccentric interacting with viewers of the project, waxing poetically and quasi-philosophically as he adjusts, paints, builds, and assembles, within his installations, or as he simply cuts the grass around this massive sculpture park. Deborah Che, in her "Connecting the Dots to Urban Revitalization with the Heidelberg Project" describes the project as follows:

Through his open-air art and community project, urban environmental artist Tyree Guyton has urged rethinking, action, and working towards change by participants and visitors alike at different geographic scales: on Heidelberg Street, the city of Detroit, and the world community. Given that children are the future of their communities, Heidelberg-

⁵⁰³ Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 45. Note: to be as clear as possible, it is not the eyes of the children’s toys or painted figures scattered throughout this outdoor sculpture garden that, as Herron notes above, bear “...dismembered witness to the humiliations of historical interrogation...” but the eyes of the residents and over 200 000 yearly visitors from all walks of life and parts of the world that come to view and participate in the spectacle of Guyton’s creation that provide a sense of community, participation, and thereby a sense safety and security often lacking in nearby parts of Detroit. The HP welcomes the viewer and visitor and provides a contextual landscape that overcomes the ambiguity otherwise present in much Detroit.

⁵⁰⁴ See 3.3 above.

derived youth environmental art projects are particularly crucial as they help young people understand and realize their potential.⁵⁰⁵

No longer merely a form of protest art, then, the Heidelberg Project situates itself as a community rally point in the neighbourhood, hosting ad hoc art classes for children's groups and neighbourhood youths, at the same time as it garners international attention in the art world as well as in theoretical circles that investigate critical urbanism and neighbourhood revitalization.



Figure 4.19 Heidelberg Project, 'Heidelberg Television, Grant and Tyree.' Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

To some residents, this international and academic attention can be unwelcome. I often try to picture my potential disposition to a 'protest art' project hypothetically six blocks away from where I live that serves as a 'spectacle', "...that serves as a

⁵⁰⁵ Deborah Che, "Connecting the Dots to Urban Revitalization with the Heidelberg Project" *Material Culture*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Spring 2007), 33.

visual record of the city's painful past..."⁵⁰⁶ In addition to calling media and academic attention to the abject state of my hypothetical neighbourhood (the attention itself can be a hindrance to projects that depend upon the critically ally of neglect), the project would serve as a visual reminder of this state in a manner that I may find unwelcome, in spite of the project's attempts to highlight "...the transformational power that is present in the community in both a real and imaginary sense."⁵⁰⁷



Figure 4.20 Heidelberg Project Clock. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Not without controversy, Guyton has faced complaints and even calls to condemn and bulldoze his art project. This is precisely the fate of four of Guyton's houses, which were demolished by then Mayor of Detroit, Coleman

⁵⁰⁶ Walters, "Turning the Neighborhood Inside Out," 65.

⁵⁰⁷ Walters, "Turning the Neighborhood Inside Out," 65.

Young in 1991. This demolition immediately faced push-back from defenders of the project. Shibley writes:

At the same time, however, proponents of the project recognized that something special was happening on Heidelberg Street and were prepared to fight for it. They realized that when a house was decorated, crack users and prostitutes would abandon it. When Guyton “marked” a house with his art, the community began to protect it – to this day not one of Guyton’s works has ever been vandalized. The number of visitors from outside the neighborhood also continued to grow. In 1998, an attorney documented that the Heidelberg Project had then had visitors from eighty-five different countries, all fifty states, and virtually all of the major cities in Michigan.⁵⁰⁸

Even as Guyton began to rebuild, a second group of opponents, this time with the support of Mayor Dennis Archer, campaigned successfully for the demolition of the project (1998-1999). We should note the rationale of the opponents:

...a small group of opponents, armed with arguments that stated the project was a nuisance, was attracting vermin and needed to be stopped, convinced two City Counsellors to oppose the project, and ultimately were victorious when Mayor Archer again bulldozed much of the project. It is interesting to note that several of the people we interviewed felt that a deeper source of opposition was a sense of shame on the part of residents that so many outside visitors were being made aware of the desperate circumstances of their neighborhood.⁵⁰⁹

This is one small example of cultural resistance to artist/activist efforts in a neighbourhood in Detroit, nor is it isolated. Clearly Detroiters themselves sometimes oppose artistic or activist efforts at re-visioning or revaluating within their cities. The high moralizing on the basis of the aesthetic and hygienic values of a traditional neighbourhood offered by the opponents of the Heidelberg Project, as evidenced by the reflection from Shibley above, gives way to the reality of the matter: shame for the condition of the neighbourhood heightened by attention attracted by the artistic endeavor – the artistic endeavor itself directed toward effecting a reversal that would bring hope rather than shame in the face of the very conditions at issue. We should again note with Nietzsche:

⁵⁰⁸ Robert Shibley, *2005 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence: Reinventing Downtown*, (Detroit: Bruner Foundation, 2005), 158.

⁵⁰⁹ Shibley, *2005 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*, 159.

To whom can one turn today with *such* hopes and demands? ... The good men are the very people who would oppose it; as would, of course, the comfortable, the reconciled, the vain, the sentimentally effusive, the exhausted men... (GM II 24)

4.3 'The Motor City is Burning'

The Motor City is burning, ain't a thing that I can do
Ooh the Motor City is burning, ain't a thing that I can do
I just hope people, it'd never happen to you.⁵¹⁰

Unfortunately, as of May 2013, the statement issued above by Shibley ("...to this day not one of Guyton's works has ever been vandalized..."⁵¹¹), ceased to be true when a series of 12 arsons destroyed a number of the houses that make up the footprint of the project. This series of attacks on the project, and there is no other way to put it, spawned a number of artist response statements. These statements were initially attempts to bring the arsonist into the fold, as evidenced by the following selection from the October 5th 2013 artist statement pertaining to the destruction of the 'OJ house' by arson:

We want you to know that we understand your pain. We realize that all you've grown to know is destruction and that you see no way out. This is precisely why we are here. Our work is not about tangible "things," it is about the Power of the Human Spirit. We recognize that there is a fire in you and we are here not to extinguish it, but to offer you a better reason to fuel it. Though you have tried, you cannot destroy the Heidelberg Project; it's bigger than all of us now. Instead, we invite you to join our family in creating a better neighborhood, a better Detroit, if not for anyone else than for yourself. As Tyree has said, "If you believe, you can change it..." We believe.⁵¹²

In this artist statement we find a message consistent with the expression of a healthy morality that illustrates life affirming practice that is in keeping with the prescriptions of the performed critical disposition of the Heidelberg Project which is instantiated in various artist efforts throughout its, at this point, thirty year history. The project challenges Detroiters to see blight, abandonment, and the

⁵¹⁰ John Lee Hooker, "The Motor City is Burning," *Urban Blues*, 1968.

⁵¹¹ Shibley, *2005 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*, 158.

⁵¹² "The Heidelberg Project: Publications," October 5th, 2013, Accessed April 16, 2016. http://www.heidelberg.org/news_publications/.

refuse left behind by industrial decline not as dispiriting factors, but rather as a medium to create new forms of urban habitation that instantiate values that are *humanly sustainable* (...in the sense discussed early on in this work).⁵¹³



Figure 4.21 Heidelberg Project Security Notice. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

As the fires continued, the artist statements and responses to the actions of the still unknown arsonist became both increasingly grim and more accusatory. Guyton and his collective begin to apply security practices to secure, and symbolically, remove the Heidelberg Project from its context within Detroit. The following statement was issued after the 5th fire, suggesting that security steps need to be taken to defend the project:

As we struggle to maintain a sense of calm and rational thinking, we first want to say that we are grateful that none of our residents have been affected by these senseless acts of

⁵¹³ See p. 102.

violence. However, we are now deeply concerned for their safety and welfare. This being the case, we are working on three concrete measures:

1. We have enlisted a car to patrol the project starting *tonight*
2. We are working on our own improved lighting of the area
3. We hope to strategically place security cameras throughout the project

No, we won't give up or give in. We will continue to positively impact our community through art. When I stop and reflect on what 2013 has brought with these series of fires, I am convinced that we are on to something very powerful. If this were not the case, negativity would not rear its ugly head. However, we were not stopped by bulldozers and we will not be stopped by acts of arson. Instead we WILL become smarter, stronger and even greater. Our history after 27 years demonstrates this!⁵¹⁴

This statement was followed almost immediately by another fire on November 21st, 2013. Another statement, no longer reflecting on the pain of the arsonist, but rather the anger of the collective reflecting on the willfulness and 'evil' of the affront to the project, was issued. Still, even in this expression tainted by anger we find Guyton presenting his artist efforts as those of a cultural physician, issuing statements that should remind us of the vitalism, agonism, and affirmation prescribed by Nietzsche. It reads:

The Heidelberg Project is internationally reviewed as a fertile ground for creating art from existing fragments; the evidence of waste, consumption and greed. For nearly three decades Tyree has led the cause to reach across economic and geographical boundaries to bridge cultural differences through artistic expression. He is raising awareness for the power of "art as medicine" in a community that has been devastated. Ill-health, under-employment, dismal environments, apathy and crime are the fallout of a post industrial [sic.] era. People are hurting leaving them in a state of hopelessness, despair and destruction of which Standard medicine cannot cure.

The HP is a sacred battle ground that has withstood damage by bulldozers and now WILLFUL destruction by fire. However we must preserve and protect the ongoing creative and spiritual contribution of The Heidelberg Project. If we can't get justice from our city, we must stand for justice. We must stand in defiance of evil!

As we try and wrap our head around this we remember that it has been said everything happens for a reason. Maybe the old is making room for the new. However we are certain that the Heidelberg Project will propel to a new and even greater Heidelberg Project and a new promise for the future of Detroit.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹⁴ "The Heidelberg Project: Publications," November 12th, 2013, Accessed April 16, 2016. http://www.heidelberg.org/news_publications/.

⁵¹⁵ "The Heidelberg Project: Publications," November 21st, 2013, Accessed April 16, 2016. http://www.heidelberg.org/news_publications/.

A pair of fires, November 28th, 2013 ('The War Room House'), and December 8th 2013 ('The Clock House'), followed this statement occasioning the project to engage an 'Indiegogo' campaign to raise fifty thousand dollars for a 'securing a legacy' project that would institute frequent security patrols and install upgraded solar powered security cameras.



Figure 4.22 Heidelberg Project Solar Powered Security Cameras. Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

In addition, a cash reward (ultimately of thirty thousand dollars supported by private donors) was offered "...to individual(s) for information leading to the arrest of the persons responsible for the arson that destroyed several of the Heidelberg Project houses."⁵¹⁶ These efforts were followed by three more arsons (March 7th,

⁵¹⁶ "The Heidelberg Project: Publications," December 14th, 2013, Accessed April 16, 2016.

http://www.heidelberg.org/news_publications/.

At the time I had some mixed feelings about the diffidence of the project's response to those responsible for the arsons. I tried to reflect regarding why these attacks would be perpetrated

2014, September 30th, 2014, and November 23rd, 2014) and most recently a break-in by vandals (November 9th, 2015). In all a total of seven of the houses that make up the Heidelberg project (eight including the house designed by collaborator Tim Burke: 'Detroit Industrial Gallery') were destroyed in addition to two that were damaged by the dozen fires⁵¹⁷ and one intrusion by vandals.

Arson is not infrequent in the northeast side of Detroit, nor is violent crime. As a 2005 publication investigating the Heidelberg Project as a model for urban reinvention notes of the greater neighbourhood where the project resides:

Abandoned houses burn down in the neighborhood at an estimated rate of eight to ten per month, with their charred remains left standing as a grim reminder of urban decay, drugs, homelessness, and poverty. In 2002, over 300 serious crimes occurred in this census tract, thirty-three percent of which were violent in nature.⁵¹⁸

In a sense it is remarkable and a testament to the disposition of the Project that this artist initiative managed to avoid the general demeanor of the neighbourhood for the twenty seven years it did. In fact, most organized community collectives that engage in urban gardening and neighbourhood building efforts are on the whole left alone by arsonists and vandals. The troubles that have only recently plagued the Heidelberg Project are the exception to the general rule of respect for efforts to stabilize neighbourhoods by these groups.

after twenty seven years with no incident. I am not, however, sufficiently embedded in the context of this neighbourhood to sufficiently draw an inference. I ultimately decided to donate to the 'Securing a Legacy' campaign, though with misgivings echoing Jacobs ("It is futile to try to evade the issue of unsafe city streets by attempting to make some other features of a locality, say interior courtyards, or sheltered play spaces, safe instead." Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 45).

⁵¹⁷ Louis Aguilar, "12 Heidelberg fires, all a mystery: Arsons At Detroit Art Project Unsolved, Despite Reward, Publicity, Security Video," *Detroit News*, February 20th, 2015, Accessed April 16, 2016. <http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/special-reports/2015/02/20/heidelberg-arsons-detroit-hard-solve/23769375/>.

⁵¹⁸ Shibley, 2005 *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*, 155-156.

The efforts to 'secure the legacy' of the Heidelberg Project have been mostly futile. One temporary camera that was intended to discourage the efforts of arsonists was itself damaged by arson. In a later incident an image of the arsonist was captured, but nothing came of the investigation even with video evidence coupled with a substantial reward. It is also unlikely that the perpetrators of the November 2015 break in will be apprehended, despite clear video recordings of their intrusion. It seems that Jacobs is correct when she points to the futility of security efforts in the absence of a supportive and engaged community. It is a testament to the value of the thirty year tenure of the project that it is only recently that these arsonist attacks have occurred, and for this long tenure, only recently has the impression that security efforts might be necessary emerged.⁵¹⁹

The arson that has recently plagued the Heidelberg Project is a general and ambiguous force within Detroit. Given the number of abandoned homes in Detroit, some of them just burn down due to environmental factors. Dramatic instances of arson occurred in connection with the race rebellion in 1967, spawning the John Lee Hooker hit ('The Motor City is Burning') that we began this section with. Arsonists really became pervasive in 1983 with the advent of a Detroit tradition called 'Devil's Night'. 'Devil's Night' is a traditional cultural frenzy on the night before Halloween, but is more generally understood to encompass a three day period (October 29-31). On these 'Devil's Nights' the undirected

⁵¹⁹ It would be tempting to attempt to ascribe motives to the arsonists that attacked the project. Are these humiliated neighbours? Has the public reception of the project changed as it garners more international success? Are these fires the work of teens under stimulated by the city due to the lack of entertainment and enrichment resources? Etc. Any attempt to ascribe such motives to the yet-unknown arsonists would be mere speculation.

energy built up in the region finds expression in widespread acts of arson. Toni Mocerri in his short article “Devil’s Night” reflects:

Known in Detroit as ‘Devil’s Night’, October 30 has become infamous around the world as the day Detroit sets itself on fire. Devil’s Night fires began in large numbers in 1983. That year Detroit had over 600 fires during the three day *Halloween* period from October 29 to October 31. The following year, ‘Devils Night’ fires reached epic proportions and called international attention to Detroit. ‘Devils Night’ in 1984 was the worst in Detroit’s history: the city experienced 297 fires on ‘Devils Night’ and 810 during the three day Halloween period. Former Detroit Fire Department Chief John Bozich describes the devastation of 1984: “1984 was our worst ‘Devil’s Night,’ the worst fire scenes I have seen since the riots of 1967. We had fires burning where there were no fire companies to respond... it was the worst thing I have seen on a non-riot basis.”⁵²⁰

LeDuff, noting that this phenomenon also acts as a tourist draw, adds:

The depth of Detroit’s problems was burned into the national consciousness decades ago in the early eighties when, inexplicably, the city would burst into flames each year in a pre-Halloween Mardi Gras of arson and destruction known as Devil’s Night. There were 810 arsons reported in 1984, as Detroit became a porch light to every fire bug across the country, a tourist destination for lunatics and thrill seekers.⁵²¹

In the eighties this phenomenon became so extreme that Detroit city hall has been forced to institute mandatory police enforced curfews for non-adults on October 30, and has organized a volunteer effort that was dubbed ‘Angels’ Night’ to act as a counterbalancing force. It is not only in terms of a pre-Halloween ‘Mardi Gras’ that, in Detroit, the urge to burn finds expression. There can be money in arson, especially when you hold property in Detroit that will not sell, but is still insured. For these purposes there exists an underground arson economy.

Additionally, it is generally known that arson acts as a source of entertainment for the youth of Detroit. LeDuff, relating claims made by Detroit firefighter Mike Nevin, notes:

“Arson,” he [Nevin] said. “In this town, arson is off the hook. Thousands of them a year, bro. In Detroit, it’s so fucking poor that fire is cheaper than a movie. A can of gas is three-fifty and a movie is eight bucks, and there aren’t any movie theatres left in Detroit,

⁵²⁰ Toni Mocerri, “Devils Night,” in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt, comp. Berlin: Kulturstiftung des Bundes (Federal Cultural Foundation, Germany, 2004), 71.

⁵²¹ LeDuff, *Detroit*, 54.

so fuck it. They burn the empty house next door and they sit on the fucking porch with a forty, and they're barbecuing and laughing 'cause it's fucking entertainment. It's unbelievable. And the old lady living next door, she don't have insurance, and her house goes up in flames and she's homeless and another fucking block dies."⁵²²

There was a time in my youth – a period of about six months when high school friends of mine had (somehow) managed to rent a large house on Riverside Drive in Windsor. From the vantage point of this house, the Detroit arson was entertainment for my small cadre of friends and myself. We used to watch for fires across the river in Detroit on Friday and Saturday nights from the screened in porch facing the river. Even from our vantage point in Canada, the frequent fires were visible and, I am embarrassed to admit, from the vantage point of cultural and physical distance, somewhat soothing.

As popularized by Eminem in the film 'The 8th Mile', arson can also sometimes have a productive effect as in the scene where a house that was used as a site to rape a young girl is burned down in order to ensure that the house was never the site of such a crime again. LeDuff recounts a neighbourhood burning of a crack house to the same effect:

A mini-riot was about to erupt, with the firemen screaming at a man who had blocked the street with his van. I jumped out of my car and ran toward the crowd. "What's going on?" I asked a heavysset woman with her hair in a cloth, showing her my press card. "That be a crack house," she said. "We been calling the police every day, but nobody does nothing. That house be wild and we got children living here. So somebody lit the house on fire and nobody on this block wants it put out." I told this to the battalion chief, who finally managed to negotiate his rigs through the crowd without incident. "I can't say I blame them," he said. "Sometimes people gotta do for themselves."⁵²³

⁵²² LeDuff, *Detroit*, 49.

⁵²³ LeDuff, *Detroit*, 151. See also: Dan Chu and Maria Leonhauser, "Two Angry Neighbors Burn Out a Nest of Crack Dealers, but Now They're in Big Trouble Themselves," *People*, Vol. 29, No. 12, March 28, 1988, Accessed April 16, 2016. <http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20098589,00.html>.

Herscher, when recounting the potential motives for arson in Detroit in his description of “Fire Break” (an artist project that attempts to transform “...burned houses from unusable private property to proto-public space...”⁵²⁴), echoes this ambiguity:

The tens of thousands of vacant and abandoned homes in Detroit have frequently been targets of arson. Sometimes this arson provides a means for property owners to collect insurance on homes they are unable to sell; *sometimes it is a means for neighborhood residents to eradicate activities that they deem threatening or damaging to their community*; and sometimes it is a form of recreation that is of particular salience in a city where dedicated recreation facilities are scarce or inaccessible.⁵²⁵

In some cases, amid the myriad of motives that can bring about the fire-bug urge within the landscape of Detroit, arson can have the effect of cleansing a neighbourhood of criminal elements and other dangerous hazards. Unfortunately such efforts most often leave a blighted and burned out structure in the neighbourhood (since Detroit has limited resources to demolish the litany of such buildings that dot the landscape). That cost is weighed against the benefits of a likely reduction in drug traffic and the reduced likelihood of neighbourhood violence tied to criminal activity. Though this response to crime and dangerous structures is clearly not optimal, in a city without the will or resources to provide the conditions necessary to secure or sustain its neighbourhoods, as the unnamed battalion chief reflects, in these conditions ‘sometimes people gotta do for themselves.’ Nonetheless, our treatment of fire serves to further demonstrate an Nietzschean reflection, namely that the drives of the culture of Detroit are in many respects destructively in conflict with one another, serving ultimately to mutilate the physical and cultural landscape of the city.

⁵²⁴ Herscher, *Guide*, 30.

⁵²⁵ Herscher, *Guide*, 30. (Emphasis mine)

Though arson itself is an ambiguous force, the acts that face the Heidelberg Project seem to be acts of directed protest against an artist project that situates itself, at least partially, as protest art. We are likely never to get a full and honest explanation of the motives that have brought about this act of violence. It is clear, however, that attempts by the project to 'secure a legacy' in the face of these acts are at best ineffectual. At worst, it is possible that these attempts, attempts heightened by artist statements that condemn the arsonists behind these acts as 'evil' or 'ugly' have added fuel to the flames. In fact, statements like "...we were not stopped by bulldozers and we will not be stopped by acts of arson. Instead we WILL become smarter, stronger and even greater. Our history after 27 years demonstrates this!"⁵²⁶ sound like they dare the arsonist to try harder. In any case, these security efforts and artist statements serve to undermine the proposed goals of the project, highlighted by Walters as emphasizing "...the transformational power that is present in the community in both a real and imaginary sense."⁵²⁷ The Heidelberg Project, in this instance, fails to present itself as a counter point to the security minded modalities present in downtown and midtown, the 'city within a city' or the 'suburb within a city' of the 'RenCen' and Lafayette Park.

4.4 The Rule of the Rich

In 2013 I attended the Detroit International Jazz Festival, a major festival that takes place over several city blocks in downtown Detroit – from Hart Plaza to Campus Martius. This particular year, the usual sense of optimism and cheer at

⁵²⁶ "The Heidelberg Project: Publications," November 12th, 2013, Accessed April 16, 2016. http://www.heidelberg.org/news_publications/.

⁵²⁷ Walters, "Turning the Neighborhood Inside Out," 65.

this festival was marred by the dark clouds of Detroit's chapter 9 bankruptcy, making the festival particularly and uncharacteristically sombre. During the opening ceremony, Mark Stryker from the *Detroit Free Press* said, "Opening night of Detroit Jazz Festival chases away bankruptcy blues".⁵²⁸ During the festival a number of city officials addressed the crowd, including then Detroit mayor Dave Bing. During a series of proclamations, Bing, while thanking Detroit philanthropist and Mack Avenue Records Chairman Gretchen Valade, a major sponsor of the festival who established a \$10 million endowment to support festival operations, took a moment to quip that he wished she could cut a check to save the city of Detroit the way she did the festival. While half in jest, this quip illustrates a brand of thinking trenchant in Detroit political and economic thinking: one that looks to the wealthy philanthropists to arrive as saviours. Detroit loves both its wealthy and the thought of a saviour who can save the city from its woes.

We began this chapter with reflections about the 'Hail Mary' attempts to revitalize these deindustrializing urban landscapes usually taking the form of sports stadia or large sporting events, casino gambling, or offering massive economic incentives to multi-national corporations to persuade them to set up shop within these cities. This will to a 'Hail Mary' frequently takes the form of deifying individuals with spiritual and saviour qualities. The interests of these individuals are always and everywhere economic. The latest saviour to hit the streets of Detroit is Dan Gilbert. Gilbert is descriptively introduced by the title of an article originally published in the *National Journal*: "Is Dan Gilbert Detroit's

⁵²⁸ "34th Annual Detroit Jazz Festival: Annual Report, August 30 – September 2 2013," Accessed April 16, 2016. <http://www.detroitjazzfest.com/pdf/2013-DJF-Annual-Report.pdf>.

New Superhero?: Stop talking about how to save Detroit. Local billionaire Dan Gilbert is playing up the city's strengths to make it vibrant once again.” The Article characterizes Gilbert as follows:

Dan Gilbert doesn't need a political title; elected office could hardly augment his financial influence over Detroit. The founder and chairman of Rock Ventures, an umbrella entity that includes Quicken Loans and scores of other properties, Gilbert has consolidated power in the region in an astonishingly short time. First, he moved Quicken Loans' headquarters from the suburbs to downtown in August 2010. In the three-and-a-half years since, Gilbert has established himself as Detroit's de facto CEO. He now controls more than 40 downtown properties — covering nearly 8 million square feet of real estate — and his companies have shifted more than 12,000 employees into the city. To date, Gilbert's total investment in Detroit nears \$1.5 billion. (For comparison, the city's annual budget for 2013 was \$1.12 billion.)⁵²⁹

Gilbert is clearly an economic powerhouse with plans for Detroit. What shape those plans will take and whose interests they will ultimately serve is a matter of speculation, although the infatuation of the media with Gilbert is unmistakable. Also telling is the statement “Stop talking about how to save Detroit” featured prominently in the subtitle of this article, which critically offloads community and municipal reflections to the will of the ruling oligarch: “...Detroit's de facto CEO...”⁵³⁰

Reporter Anna Clark, in her article “Detroit’s Dan Gilbert and the ‘saviour complex’: How do you cover a dominating figure in a struggling city without losing your skepticism?,” raises several issues with the practices of Gilbert, the saviour complex prevalent in Detroit, and gaps in reportage on Gilbert when depicted in terms of a saviour in the context of a struggling city – one frequently represented in post-apocalyptic terms. She reflects:

⁵²⁹ Tim Alberta, “Is Dan Gilbert Detroit's New Superhero?,” *The Atlantic*, February 27, 2014, Accessed April 16, 2016. <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/02/is-dan-gilbert-detroits-new-superhero/425742/>.

⁵³⁰ Tim Alberta, “Is Dan Gilbert Detroit's New Superhero?”

In Detroit—where Gilbert’s energy, buoyant vision, and money arrived around the same time that the city was navigating emergency management and the nation’s largest-ever municipal bankruptcy—it can lead to portrayals as a sort of investor-savior [sic].⁵³¹

The effects of this saviour complex, Clark argues, can stifle and otherwise suppress potential critical reports regarding the proposals of investors in Detroit like Gilbert and the legions of “...mini-Gilberts...”⁵³² who have descended upon Detroit with economic “...post-post-apocalyptic optimism...”⁵³³ that aims to capitalize on the thought that “...the city has fallen as far as it can go...”⁵³⁴ This reflection relies upon the naïve cyclical understanding of the economic fate of manufacturing cities mentioned in the introduction.⁵³⁵ Clark cites Jeff Wattrick, managing editor of *ClickOnDetroit*, who reflects:

There is some egregious cheerleading in this town, on the part of people saying we can’t cover downtown development or developers in a critical way—I mean that in the sense of critical thinking—without upsetting the apple cart,” he said. He added: “Detroit has had, I think, a savior [sic.] complex for a long time.”⁵³⁶

Though this passage from Wattrick reflects a common belief of a ‘come back’ – one that, granted, is too fragile to endure any critical appraisal – nonetheless further illustrates the claim that a large part of the stubborn habitual beliefs of Detroiters do not rest upon the values of spiritedness, self-reliance, agency, and overcoming exhibited by the urban movements discussed in this work. Rather, the dominant thought is that it will be individuals on the model of Ford or Kresge,

⁵³¹ Anna Clark, “Detroit’s Dan Gilbert and the ‘Savior Complex’,” *CJR*, August 18, 2014, Accessed April 16, 2016. http://www.cjr.org/united_states_project/dan_gilbert_detroit.php.

⁵³² Ben Austen, “The Post-Post-Apocalyptic Detroit,” *New York Times*, July 11, 2014, Accessed April 16, 2016. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/13/magazine/the-post-post-apocalyptic-detroit.html>.

⁵³³ Austen, “The Post-Post-Apocalyptic Detroit.”

⁵³⁴ Austen, “The Post-Post-Apocalyptic Detroit.”

⁵³⁵ See pp. 1-3 above.

⁵³⁶ Clark, “Detroit’s Dan Gilbert and the ‘Savior Complex’.”

the model that would have a billionaire investor or massive corporate entity ride to the rescue on a white steed.

The ‘don’t upset the apple cart’ argument presented by Wattrick is reminiscent of the rhetoric employed by David Musyj, the CEO of Windsor Regional Hospitals, with regard to the plan to build a proposed two billion dollar mega-hospital. Musyj argues that any critique of the plan to relocate hospital services in Windsor by closing the two existing hospitals and emergency rooms within the city core to a ‘greenfield’ site⁵³⁷ in a bean field at the outskirts of town might upset the funding arrangement for hospital development and result in no federal investment. Any public discussion of this proposal that in any way calls into question the selection of the site for the hospital is taken to be an attack upon hospital investment in Windsor generally. This has allowed hospital administration and the city to block any discussion of this massive investment in public infrastructure on the basis that it is oppositional and advanced by ‘nay-sayers’ and ‘community troublemakers.’

There are two other potent reflections by Clark that reveal uncovered angles of reporting regarding Gilbert. The first has to do with his role as founder and chairman of Quicken Loans. Following the reflections of reporter Bill Shea who covers the business of sports for *Crain’s Detroit Business*, and Ryan Felton, an investigative reporter, for *Metro Times*, Clark reflects on an obvious story that has remained ‘undone’:

Both Shea and Felton brought up an obvious one: Detroit’s experience of the housing crisis was among the worst in the nation and is, painfully, still playing out. Quicken Loans

⁵³⁷ See Figure 3.21, p. 238 above.

is a major player in the mortgage industry. What role, if any, did the company have in the lead-up to the meltdown, especially locally?"⁵³⁸

An additional issue raised earlier with regards to the campus police services at Wayne State University, is that private institutions have begun taking over traditionally public services and other governmental functions.



Figure 4.23 Woodward Ave., Downtown. Detroit, MI. August 19, 2016. Photo Credit: Grant Yocom.

⁵³⁸ Clark, "Detroit's Dan Gilbert and the 'Savior Complex'."

The weakened municipal government seems only too happy to offload the economic responsibility for maintaining a police presence in parts of the city like downtown and midtown.⁵³⁹



Figure 4.24 *Boarded Up Houses, Indian Road. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.*

This is a function provided by a private security force employed by Gilbert in downtown Detroit. Clark notes:

...what it means [sic.] that Gilbert, and some others, are increasingly influential as providers of public services, not just private capital. A recent cover story for *The New York Times Magazine* about “the post-post-apocalyptic Detroit” mentioned that a Gilbert-employed security force patrols downtown 24 hours a day and monitors 300 security cameras.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁹ Explicitly so, according to a WDET report recently aired on the Detroit NPR station, Quinn Klinefelter, “Detroit Chief OK with Private Security Policing Downtown,” July 6, 2016, Accessed July 6, 2016. <http://wdet.org/posts/2016/07/06/83422-detroit-chief-ok-with-private-security-policing-downtown/>.

⁵⁴⁰ Clark, “Detroit’s Dan Gilbert and the ‘Savior Complex’.”

If the efforts of Gilbert and others were contained to downtown and midtown they would not greatly impact the efforts of the community organizations and activists/artists discussed in this project. Problematically, however, the massive game of Monopoly with which billionaire investors like Gilbert, Mike Ilitch, and Manuel “Matty” Moroun are engaged in has spilled over into the greater landscape of Detroit and, in the case of Moroun, across the river to Windsor. Recently Gilbert, for reasons unknown, has purchased a large swath of property in Corktown, Detroit. Ilitch, the owner of Little Caesars Pizza, the Detroit Red Wings, and the Tigers, is the force behind the *six hundred and fifty million dollar* development of the Red Wings Stadium (Detroit Events Center) under construction in Midtown whose funding was rolled into the Detroit bankruptcy exit deal.



Figure 4.25 *Little Caesars 'Hot and Ready' Stadium Construction.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Most notably, “Matty” Moroun, described by LeDuff as “...the billionaire trucking magnate who owned the Ambassador Bridge connecting Detroit to Canada...”, “...Detroit’s biggest owner of dilapidated buildings...”, and “...Detroit’s billionaire slumlord...”⁵⁴¹ has a penchant for this Monopoly contest, having bought up much of the former rail infrastructure (including Michigan Central Station⁵⁴²), and just about every piece of river-front property on either side of the border that he can lay his hands on.

With respect to the treatment of the Michigan Central Station, Moroun has, as noted by Mark Binelli in his *Detroit City Is the Place to Be*, “...allowed the station to steadily molder.”⁵⁴³ The effect of the building, as described by Binelli:

...looms like a Gothic Castle over its humbler neighbors on Michigan Avenue. There’s a gray, sepulchral quality to the place. Standing before a ruin as monolithic as the station, it’s hard not to think of other epic-scale disasters that seemed engineered from above to illustrate man’s folly – as if the Titanic, after sinking, had washed ashore and been permanently beached as a warning. The ornate ground floor, with its soaring arches – this part of the building modeled on the baths – juts from the base of the brick tower, which, up close, draws your eyes along its façade of tightly gridded windows, nearly all broken now, giving the structure an odd, insubstantial effect, that of meshwork, or a scrim, in contrast with its dominating physical presence.⁵⁴⁴

Virtually everyone in North America has, knowingly or otherwise, seen the Depot since it is frequently used as the backdrop for major Hollywood movies such as *Transformers*, *The Island*, and most recently *Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice*. The former Detroit Public Schools Book Depository, located just around the corner, is depicted (along with the Depot) in Moore’s *Detroit Disassembled*, which shows the interior of the building filled with rotting school supplies (books, desks, paper, pencils, maps, globes, etc.) in the context of a Detroit Public

⁵⁴¹ LeDuff, *Detroit*, 128.

⁵⁴² See Figure 1.5, P. 56 and Figure 4.13, P. 298 above.

⁵⁴³ Mark Binelli, *Detroit City Is the Place to Be: The Afterlife of an American Metropolis*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012), 279.

⁵⁴⁴ Binelli, *Detroit City Is the Place to Be*, 279.

School system starved for supplies. In a footnote, Binelli summarizes masterfully the tactics employed by Moroun.



Figure 4.26 House, Indian Road. Windsor, ON. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

He writes:

In a city weak enough to be routinely pushed around by wealthy power players, Moroun has managed the impressive feat of reigning, undisputed, as the most reviled member of the local oligarchy. A reclusive octogenarian billionaire, Moroun also owns the nearby Ambassador Bridge, which spans the Detroit River to connect the city with Windsor, Ontario, thereby controlling an unbelievably lucrative international border crossing. A quarter of the annual \$400 billion in trade between the U.S. and Canada travels across this single bridge. Moroun is estimated to earn \$60 million annually in tolls alone, and he has spent the past decade stymying efforts by the U.S. and Canada to build a second, jointly owned public bridge two miles down the river, necessary in part because the Ambassador Bridge is over seventy-five years old and sorely in need of refurbishment, and in part because of the outrageousness of the fact that a single private individual owns the busiest international border crossing in North America. ... In the meantime, Moroun has gobbled up properties in both Detroit and Windsor, near the sites of both proposed bridges, most of which are maintained as lovingly as Michigan Central.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴⁵ Binelli, *Detroit City Is the Place to Be*, 279.

Properties in Windsor owned by Moroun include school buildings, an entire stretch of homes on Indian Road surrounding the Ambassador Bridge, and most recently one of the oldest roadhouses in Canada called Abars (where Al Capone was a regular during prohibition). The fates of the houses that now stand blighted, boarded up and behind chain link fences on Indian Road (which have been deemed historical by the City of Windsor) are currently being determined by the Supreme Court of Canada. While Moroun and the Detroit International Bridge Co. want to demolish the 114 empty homes to make way for an expansion of the privately owned Ambassador Bridge, the City of Windsor wants to preserve the neighbourhood, has prohibited the demolition, and tried to use its property standards bylaw to require the bridge company to repair the houses. It is worth noting, even as an aside, that Moroun has (as a *Forbes* article asserts) "...made a career of stretching the law to its limits ... in order to protect his lucrative interest in Detroit's Ambassador Bridge..." and in 2012 was jailed (along with his right hand man, Dan Stamper – President of the Detroit International Bridge Co.) for obstruction of justice after years of litigation. They were to be held "...until they comply with his [the judge] order to finish building ramps that connect the bridge to nearby expressways."⁵⁴⁶ Both Moroun and Stamper spent only one night in jail.

Regardless of the conditions that would allow such oligarchs to exist and thrive, the desperation of an embattled city hoping for economic salvation or the

⁵⁴⁶ Joann Muler, "Billionaire Bridge Owner's Greed Lands Him In Jail," *Forbes*, January 12, 2012, Accessed July 7, 2016. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/joannmuller/2012/01/12/billionaire-bridge-owners-greed-lands-him-in-jail/#2b5c6547e2d3>.

political weakness of corrupt city officials, and the effect of this grand game of Monopoly produces conditions where oligarchs like Moroun, Gilbert, and Ilitch along with legions of mini-Morouns, Gilberts, and Ilitches craft, apply and enforce official policy within greater Detroit, frequently at the expense of activist community at work in neighbourhoods within the city. Just as when belligerent failing city systems open up the inclinations and possibilities for residents to, using Herscher's terms, assert a right to the city, these same conditions lay the groundwork for private companies and wealthy individuals to "...step by step absorb the business of the state..." (HH I 472) As subversive as activist movements may be, their subversiveness pales in comparison to the practices of the corporations wielded by these oligarchs. The wealthy have the resources, and their lawyers and lobbyists influence the laws of the land. In many cases they both make and enforce the laws of the land, or at least have the means to remain above them. If, as Hardt and Negri argue, "...*resistance is primary with respect to power...*," then we should read the exercise of power itself (both political and economic) as the truly subversive force.

To illustrate, in December of 2012, Detroit unveiled its *Future City Framework (DFCF)* which is "...a comprehensive and action-oriented blueprint for near- and long-range decision making."⁵⁴⁷ In broad strokes, the plan, which implicates a time frame ranging as far as 2030, was designed to address the problems associated with land use, delivery of city services to the dwindling population of Detroit, and stimulating economic investment within the region. Though having such a plan is not a bad idea, we should note that this plan,

⁵⁴⁷ *Detroit Future City Strategic Framework (DFCF)*, (Detroit: Inland Press, 2012), 11.

published as a book, is a packaged representation of the city of Detroit and derives its power in terms of archival authority. This document as *topoi*, in turn, contributes to the *topos* or "...imaginary cultural image..."⁵⁴⁸ of Detroit and represents an act of power that (explicitly in this case) aims to produce both material and social effects. As such, it should be evaluated normatively. Many community organizers that I interviewed unofficially voiced skepticism about the authenticity of the consultation process that brought about the framework, reinforcing the argument advanced by Belton that the emergence of a *topos* is within the purview of the elites.

Presented in optimistic terms, the DFCF outlines its core values, the first of which is already contradicted by the skepticism of community organizers regarding the consultation process:

Four core values were put in place at the beginning of the process, to create a shared vision and plan of action:

- Aspirational where it should be and practical where it must be
- Respectful of the city's history, community efforts, and new ideas
- Just and equitable in seeking to create benefits for all
- Transparent and inclusive of all voices participating to improve our Community"⁵⁴⁹

To be clear, this plan was never approved by any official body within city politics as 'the' plan. It proposed the consolidation of the present population into higher-density clusters within the city to reduce the costs associated with infrastructure maintenance and utilities delivery, while proposing strict regulation of 'strategic and coordinated in our use of land' within both vacant and populated areas of the city. Nowhere in the proposal does the plan suggest that residents should be force-relocated, although it does suggest that residents should be encouraged to

⁵⁴⁸ Belton, *Orinoco Flow*, 2.

⁵⁴⁹ DFCF, 6.

move to the designated ‘areas of economic potential.’ The plan identified the following 12 imperative actions:

1. We must re-energize Detroit’s economy to increase job opportunities for Detroiters within the city and strengthen the tax base.
2. We must support our current residents and attract new residents.
3. We must use innovative approaches to transform our vacant land in ways that increase the value and productivity and promote long-term sustainability.
4. We must use our open space to improve the health of all Detroit’s residents.
5. We must promote a range of sustainable residential densities.
6. We must focus on sizing the networks for a smaller population, making them more efficient, more affordable, and better performing.
7. We must realign city systems in ways that promote areas of economic potential, encourage thriving communities, and improve environmental and human health conditions.
8. We must be strategic and coordinated in our use of land.
9. We must promote stewardship for all areas of the city by implementing short and long-term strategies.
10. We must provide residents with meaningful ways to make change in their communities and the city at large.
11. We must pursue a collaborative regional agenda that recognizes Detroit’s strengths and our region’s shared destiny.
12. We must dedicate ourselves to implementing this framework for our future.⁵⁵⁰

Though never officially adopted by the City of Detroit, the *DFCF* has a good deal of economic power along with institutional clout behind it. This economic power and clout, in a city like Detroit where billionaires like Dan Gilbert are considered to be de facto CEO’s, is typically sufficient to bring about substantial change to the legal and physical landscape. Recall, this is a physical landscape governed by the machinations of the billionaire elite whose private forces patrol the streets and mead out the law. The Kresge Foundation, funders for the development of the plan, announced that their philanthropic efforts within the city of Detroit will now require those projects they fund to align with the Framework. A 2014 post on the Kresge Foundation web page states:

At the same time as the DFC book was released, The Kresge Foundation, after providing funding for the planning process, made an additional pledge “to align every dollar we

⁵⁵⁰ *DFCF*, 15.

spend in Detroit with the framework,” as Rip Rapson, Kresge president and chief executive officer, put it. That amounted to a five-year, \$150 million pledge.⁵⁵¹

Many Detroit community organizations do not strongly oppose this plan. Some are skeptical about the scope of such a framework given frequent aspirational promises for improved transit and other ‘pie-in-the-sky’ ideas for what the city could be. Other community organizations (like the Georgia Street Community Garden) simply had the good fortune to exist within regions identified within the plan zoned for purposes that align with the activities of their community collectives. If an organization or community collective that is reliant on Kresge philanthropic support happened to exist in an area of the city identified within the plan, where the activities of the organization or collective contradict or merely fail to align with the proposal, Kresge funding would be withdrawn. Many organizations in Detroit rely heavily, directly or indirectly, on the philanthropic support of the Kresge Foundation. Effectively, the *DFCF*, backed by investors like Gilbert and wielding the substantial financial resources from the Kresge Foundation display the characteristics of counterinsurgency strategies as described by Hardt and Negri. They argue:

It is clear at this point that counterinsurgency strategies can no longer rely only on negative techniques, such as the assassination of rebel leaders and mass arrests, but *must also create “positive” techniques*. Counterinsurgency, in other words, must not destroy the environment of insurgency but rather create and control the environment. The full-spectrum dominance we spoke of earlier is one conception of such a positive strategy to control network enemies, engaging the network not only militarily but also economically, politically, socially, psychologically, and ideologically.⁵⁵²

If we are reading community movements in Detroit as *insurgencies* – actions that work within a system that is their own to resist and unsettle the power dynamics

⁵⁵¹ “Kresge Foundation: News,” February 4, 2015, Accessed July 7, 2016.
<http://kresge.org/news/projects-exemplify-kresge-commitment-detroit-future-city-0>.

⁵⁵² Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*, 58.

and power structures in place – the *DFCF* should be read as an attempt to create and control the environment of resistance. The aspirational language employed by the *DFCF* only thinly veils the disposition of dominance expressed in terms of imperatives. This plan aims to co-opt the ‘free spiritedness’ of activists and community organizers, deploying the formal structure of their *insurgencies* in a manner that undermines their content. In the same breath the *DFCF* produces conditions where community collectives are dependent upon the funding sources associated with the plan in a manner that flies in the face of the values of self-reliance and agency that constitute the core of the struggles of these organizations.

One particularly interesting imperative is ‘number eleven,’ which reads “We must pursue a collaborative regional agenda that recognizes Detroit’s strengths and our region’s shared destiny.”⁵⁵³ One such strength identified by the Framework is the urban agriculture movement that has garnered so much media attention and grass roots community support. We should also note that Hantz Farms, owned by Hantz Group, a business financial services conglomerate in the U.S. founded by John Hantz, is listed as a participating organization in the planning stages for the Framework.⁵⁵⁴ Hantz Farms is listed along with the proposed Hantz Woodlands as a structural element within the plan itself. In 2014, Detroit mayor Mike Duggen approved a land deal that would allow Hantz to develop urban agriculture along corporate lines reliant on volunteer labour. This land deal effectively freezes out expanding community run urban

⁵⁵³ *DFCF*, 15.

⁵⁵⁴ *DFCF*, 753.

agricultural efforts within the city, putting up bureaucratic road blocks for smaller community agriculture networks that prevent them from buying the land that they need for their efforts outright. Malik Yakini, urban farming pioneer and executive director of the Black Food Security Network, spent two years of meetings and negotiations with Detroit City Council and the city's Planning and Recreation departments attempting to purchase outright the seven acre plot now used by D-Town Farms. Herscher recounts the mission of D-Town farms, operated by the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, as follows:

Through the D-Town Farm and allied programs, solutions to food insecurity have intersected with a range of other issues and sponsored a range of other effects; the farm is a site of community-building, collective-identity formation and political action, as well as agricultural production. The Network's response to food insecurity has thus cascaded into responses to other problems, not all of which are food-related, facing Detroit's African-American population.⁵⁵⁵

While Hantz Farms – a corporate entity simply engaged in efforts to produce agricultural products in a cheap urban context (on the backs of volunteer labour), devoid of the social and political aspirations of D-Town Farms – was able to purchase 140 acres of prime urban agricultural land for approximately \$300 per acre (well below market value). In the end Yakini and the Network were not able to purchase the land. Instead they are in a 10-year license agreement to use the site for \$1 annually. The agreement ends in 2018. This tension provides an example of how the formal characteristics of community movements (in this case, urban agriculture reliant upon volunteer labour) are preserved and deployed in a manner that undermines their normative (social, political, and activist) content.

Detroit loves its saviors and tends to neglect its community and neighbourhood roots, producing a Detroit at odds with itself, an anarchy of drives

⁵⁵⁵ Herscher, *Guide*, 45.

opposing drives of the sort described by Nietzsche. Even LeDuff, who is typically a doomsayer about the prospects of a Detroit that banks on the basis of the vast stores of cultural capital stored up by the multitude, as reported by Matt Haber from a 2013 interview, reflects:

While LeDuff thinks it's going to take more than just cool companies and marketing efforts to re-set the broken bones of Detroit—at one point in his book he calls writing about galleries and museums in the city "equal to writing about the surf conditions while reporting in the Gaza Strip"—he also sees that their vitality is essential, though not as essential as, say, getting more ambulances and a better 9-1-1 response system. "I'm not poo-pooing them at all," he says. "To have a robust city, you need to have all of that... A tree without roots is wood. The artists and artisans are gonna need to be the roots. You need blood, you need music, you need laughter. It's not a city without 'em. But I think we're ahead of ourselves."⁵⁵⁶

These 'Hail Mary' attempts that seek the interventions of billionaire saviors or major corporations riding to the rescue on white horses are conditioned by the massive and dispiriting problems that face the landscape of Detroit. The goal of generating vitality in this urban center, to the economically and politically dominant mindset of those at the official helm of city planning, development, and 'urban renewal' in both Windsor and Detroit, requires a sudden transformation generated by the institution of massive development or economic plans like the *Detroit Future City Framework*, or more ludicrously in Windsor, swimming pools. These plans pay little heed, or worse still, serve to stifle the tension that rests on the basis of a stable community periodically upset by innovative activists working within engaged communities. Again, if we take seriously the reflections of Jacobs, who insists the health of a city's ecosystem rests on the basis of a lively network of self-regulating engaged residents coming together in neighbourhoods

⁵⁵⁶ Matt Haber, "Remaking Detroit: Can Creative Companies Save an American City on the Brink?," *Co-Create*, February 13, 2013, Accessed July 7, 2016. <http://www.fastcocreate.com/1682409/remaking-detroit-can-creative-companies-save-an-american-city-on-the-brink>.

and communities, on the basis of Nietzsche's account of vitalism we should condemn development efforts that negate this basis of urban health and vitality on the grounds of 'the common'.

Examining the trials faced by the Heidelberg Project, it is clear that it is not only the official arms of urban power that resist, restrain, and stifle the emergence of lively networks of self-regulating engaged residents coming together in neighbourhoods and communities. In many cases it is the built environment itself or shamed, down-trodden and disillusioned individuals within the community expressing hostile habitually held presuppositions about what it means to be urban that resist and frustrate the efforts of community collectives.

The physical landscape of Detroit is one scarred by inequity, a century of industry, and prevalent social unrest. All of these factors persist in some form or another today, but are punctuated by a palpable sense and the material traces of abandonment. Many stubborn and antiquated social systems and value presuppositions associated with the manufacturing history of the region, embodied in educational and economic practices serve to frustrate the spirited agency building efforts of community leaders, continuing to impose what Crawford calls an "...ideology of choice and freedom and autonomy..." that "...start to seem less like a bubbling up of the unfettered Self and more like something that is urged upon us."⁵⁵⁷ By this ideology we become free, but free even from the expression of our own power. As we noted throughout along with Nietzsche, Herscher, and others, our identities are bound up with and constituted by our physical environments; our cities becoming an extension of how we are

⁵⁵⁷ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 63.

ourselves, and our Selves asserting creative and formative forces upon our cities. The notion of autonomy problematized by Crawford would relegate the expressions of our will to consumer choices while frustrating the expression of our human capacities. This is reminiscent of a quip from Herbert Marcuse (recounted by Deborah Cook in her *The Culture Industry Revisited: Theodor W. Adorno on Mass Culture*): “As Herbert Marcuse once quipped, freedom in capitalism is the freedom to choose between a hundred brands of toilet paper.”⁵⁵⁸ As we have seen, with the expression of freedom as mastery, self-reliance and spiritedness by theorists like Crawford and more pressingly Nietzsche, as well as embodied in the practices of community activist networks in both Windsor and Detroit, it is not a matter of being freed from the necessities of engagement. Rather, as we noted above⁵⁵⁹ with Nietzsche, “...necessity and ‘freedom of will’ become one and the same.” (BGE 213)

Even as Herscher argues that, given the pain and conditions of emergency in Detroit occasions and necessitates that individuals and community organizations assert a right to the city, these same conditions (the weakening of social and political institutions and the abject failure of city systems to properly function) establish the conditions for the possibility for wealthy individuals and

Private companies... [to] step by step absorb the business of the state: even the most resistant remainder of what was formerly the work of government (for example its activities designed to protect the private person from the private person) will in the long run be taken care of by private companies. (HH I 472)

We have already seen this happen in both the downtown core of Detroit and in Midtown. These ongoing issues have the effect of producing a Detroit at odds

⁵⁵⁸ Deborah Cook, *The Culture Industry Revisited: Theodor W. Adorno on Mass Culture*, (Toronto: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 123.

⁵⁵⁹ See p. 261 and p. 284 above.

with itself – two Detroits, as one Guardian article calls it,⁵⁶⁰ or in older terms, a city within a city – a condition described by Nietzsche as decadence or as the anarchy of drives opposing drives.

The *insurgency* of community activists, specifically in Detroit, but also in Windsor is frequently met by counterinsurgency efforts that, to paraphrase Hardt and Negri, employ positive techniques that do not destroy the environment of *insurgency*, but rather produce and control said environment. The subversive efforts of *insurgent* activist groups demand that the systems, policies, and practices enacted within the urban environment serve life and allow for the expression of human capacities. These activist actions are often criticized on the grounds that they are, in and of themselves, insufficient to address the massive structural deficiencies produced as a result of the collapse of the industrial paradigm, they do not present themselves in terms of sufficiency. Rather, they represent daring and innovative social experiments that demonstrate humanly sustainable forms of urban life and should be read as such. The damning critiques and culturally rooted prescriptions enacted through the embodied struggles and practices of these collectives is commonly obscured by insufficiency arguments, their criticisms obscured by characterizations of protest as ‘nay saying’, and their prescriptive force mutilated and co-opted by the ‘positive’ techniques of counterinsurgency (as exemplified by the *DFCF* and Hantz Farms). As a result, the inventive, inspired, and incisive character of urban activist practice that mobilizes the capacities of this unique transitional moment

⁵⁶⁰ Peter Moskowitz, “The Two Detroits: A city both collapsing and gentrifying at the same time,” *The Guardian*, February 5, 2015, Accessed July 7, 2016.
<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/feb/05/detroit-city-collapsing-gentrifying>.

that produces insecurity about the meaning of 'urban' remain, to the larger culture, remains inarticulate and suppressed by systems of power and economy that act in a manner akin to that of Nietzsche's account of reflective consciousness, acting as the voice of "...morality of custom..." as a sort of "...social strait-jacket..." (GM II 2)



Figure 4.27 *Construction Bricktown.* Detroit, MI. August 10, 2016. Photo Credit: Joshua Babcock.

Conclusion

(Forward)

The metaphor of rises and falls that frames the cultural imagination and expectations placed upon the fates of deindustrializing cities no longer holds and never, in any practical way, held. Each successive moment experienced in the development of industrialization was unsettling and forced a massive and lumbering economic system centered on production to reinvent itself. This cyclical metaphor, as a brazen misappropriation and facile interpretation of the eternal return of the same, has only ever held palliative value for those who feel themselves helplessly subject to social, political and economic forces that lie far beyond their control. The myth of the cyclical rise and fall represents a metaphorical lullaby self-told by the helpless that reinforces a spirit of helplessness.

“*The heaviest weight...*” (GS 341), as the eternal return of the same is actually introduced by Nietzsche, ironically holds more accurate and empowering metaphorical force for residents of deindustrializing urban centers like Windsor and Detroit, although it requires much more than does the cyclical metaphor. The cyclical metaphor would have residents simply buck up and endure the torrents of fate, whereas the *heaviest weight* presented by Nietzsche would have us become equal to ourselves requiring that we each and all become well-disposed to ourselves and our lives and “...long for nothing more fervently than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal...” (GS 341) This thought experiment demands engagement with the whole of our lives, our culture, and our environment. It asks of each moment and each and every thing “Do you

want this again and innumerable times again?” (GS 341) Ask yourself: what sort of culture, political systems, social institutions, accomplishments, goals, and in general, what sort of expression of human capacities would you have to embody in order to become equal to this thought? What sort of freedom would this require? The freedom of autonomy as expressed and criticized by Crawford in his *Shop Class as Soul Craft*, namely one that imposes a freedom from the constraints and demands of our societies, technology, and even our human capacities, is wholly insufficient to the challenge presented by this Nietzschean thought experiment. This thought experiment demands the agency of an engaged human experience rising to the challenges of intractable necessity – one that experiences the expression of will and such necessity as one. Beyond this expression of human capacities, this crucial thought experiment presented by Nietzsche enacts its normative standard by insisting upon an affirmative disposition, as does the entire section of the *Gay Science* (“Book Four: St Januarius”) in which this passage is contained.

John P. Beck, concludes his introductory essay to *Detroit Resurgent*, a multi-media “...global photographic odyssey...”⁵⁶¹ of the human struggles faced by this transitional and deindustrializing city, by noting:

The resurgence of Detroit will not be accomplished with smoke and mirrors as in a magic act; instead it is a human act, a set of human acts by the subjects of these portraits and the countless other Detroit residents and activists who also could have been photographed and interviewed.⁵⁶²

The aims of the artistic project *Detroit Resurgent* are not foreign to the aims of this work, namely “To give voice to people with hopes for a brighter future, and

⁵⁶¹ Howard Bossen, “Journey to Detroit: a global photographic odyssey,” in *Detroit Resurgent*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), 13.

⁵⁶² John P. Beck, “Detroit Resurgent,” in *Detroit Resurgent*, 11.

aspirations to create a new city out of the old..."⁵⁶³ These struggles pay heed to the capacities of the region that are in a sense residual, stemming from the best aspirations and capacities of a shared cultural heritage. For example, industrial assembly work that scarred the physical and psychic landscape of Windsor and Detroit – work that historically infantilized the worker, as Crawford notes, by extracting "...what was previously an integral activity, rooted in craft tradition and experience, animated by the worker's own mental image of, and intention toward, the finished product."⁵⁶⁴ While this is the case, many assembly workers, as an act of cultural resistance to this work that would infantilize them, use their private time, mental, physical, and economic resources to develop the experience and recover this lost craft tradition by working on their own automotive and mechanical projects in their home garages. Within both Windsor and Detroit there exists the capacity for a powerful and vibrant maker culture that rests on residual skills that rely on dispositions that are often passed from parent to child. While resting upon residual dispositions stemming from a shared cultural heritage, these capacities assert mastery, the will to shape relationships with devices and environment, and project a power to shape the future of the region.

Many of the visions expressed by the embodied activist movements discussed throughout this work are simple and modest. Mark Covington of the Georgia Street Community Garden simply wanted to clean up some abandoned lots and help his neighbours feed themselves. The Motor City Mower Gang only

⁵⁶³ Bossen and Beck, "Preface," in *Detroit Resurgent*, xi.

⁵⁶⁴ Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, 39.

wanted to make the neglected recreational areas safe and usable for families.

Beck reflects more generally:

The vision that many of the subjects have is rebuilding Detroit into a place where people can walk the streets safely day and night, get fresh food or retail items close by in their neighborhood markets and stores, make a living, and support one another as a true community.⁵⁶⁵

Through their modesty and simplicity these actions issue powerful criticisms of failing city systems, corrupt political and bureaucratic institutions, and the wealthy individuals wielding corporate entities that block these simple, affirmative and life-rooted visions. Through these simple and modest actions, and through the municipal, political, bureaucratic, and corporate resistance to these actions, these community collectives are beginning to coalesce into a major activist network of mutual support. This tension between simple demand, which as Herscher has argued asserts itself as a right, and the resistance of the embedded system characterized in terms of disposition by Nietzsche as "...the comfortable, the reconciled, the vain, the sentimentally effusive, the exhausted men..." (GM II 24) gives rise to the force of proposals that are also indictments. This force is not a meager rhetorical force, but is embodied through embedded and sustained practices within these urban centers taking the form of an insurgency.

Given the magnitude of the cultural, political and economic forces that block the expressions of a new common projected by the performed and sustained *insurgent* actions of these activist community movements, Beck notes that the activists themselves will likely not see their visions of a future city materialize within their lifetimes. According to Beck, these activists:

⁵⁶⁵ Bossen, "Detroit Resurgent," in *Detroit Resurgent*, 4.

...are not naively looking forward to an easy set of victories and turnarounds; they are working hard to see change, but many are dedicated to the work even though they are not totally sure of success. Blight buster John George was speaking for himself and many others when he stated the alternative to laboring away with all eyes on the prize: "Failure is not an option." Many of these workers for Detroit's revival will not see all of their dreams, plans and labors come to fruition in their lifetimes, but they move forward knowing that they are leaving Detroit better off than when they started.⁵⁶⁶

This notion of posterity imposes a differing sense of history than the prevalent and humiliated form explicated by Herron. This form of history resists the humiliated form, introduced by Herron, by imposing a 'we' which offers an explanation that transcends the personal and offers us something to belong to. Recall the account of positive and substantial history offered by Herron:

It's a way of asking questions about the past so that memory adds up to something more than personal: who am I, where did I come from, what should I do? It's how I begins to turn into we. History places limitations on an individual, then. But it also gives you something to belong to. History is an explanation.⁵⁶⁷

Herron contrasted this notion of substantial and positive history with the humiliated Fordist history that does not form a collective connection or remembering. Rather, it produces a particular form of nostalgia, a forgetting that is nostalgic, souvenir-oriented, and individuating. The activist form of history that relies upon the posterity of "...leaving Detroit better off..."⁵⁶⁸ yields a third and projective alternative. This notion of history offers more than an explanation. It offers momentum and a projection into "...a *new* human greatness, a new, untrodden path to human aggrandizement..." that says "...We must go there, out there, where all of *you* today are least at home." (BGE 212) As expressed by 'blight buster' John George, the option of failure is unacceptable. This form of history that lies beneath the strivings of embedded activists does not rest in the

⁵⁶⁶ Bossen, "Detroit Resurgent," in *Detroit Resurgent*, 4.

⁵⁶⁷ Herron, "I Remember Detroit," 38.

⁵⁶⁸ Bossen, "Detroit Resurgent," in *Detroit Resurgent*, 4.

'yesterday' of Herron or the 'today' of Ford. It rests more profoundly in something like the 'tomorrow' expressed so heroically by Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*, a disposition to history that assigns "...value and rank according to how many and how many sorts of things one person could bear, could take upon himself, by how *far* a person could extend his responsibility." (BGE 212)

The empowerment represented by a projective disposition to a history grounded in an ongoing struggle is vitally necessary in the context of cultural and media (archival) representations of cities like Windsor and Detroit. The sense of place generated by mythic representations of these cities can and does have the effect of generating a dispiriting and isolating fear of these places that can paralyze residents, visitors, and theorists alike, thereby frustrating the dispositions of engagement that cities and city neighbourhoods rely upon for their health and vitality. The physical landscape of Detroit itself – one that is pregnant with the traces of abandoned lives that has become an unintended monument to the absent – reinforces the dispiriting notion that residents of Detroit are dispossessed, surplus, extra, and unwanted. Such a landscape and such representations require that activists and engaged residents become "...argonauts of the ideal – braver, perhaps, than is prudent and often suffering shipwreck and damage but ...healthier than one would like to admit, dangerously healthy; ever again healthy..." (GS 382) It is not merely the city systems and dispiriting representations of their home that these insurgent activists must engage, but also the identities and dispositions formed by these city systems and dispiriting representations. Through self-genealogy and the practice of

performed experimentation we are called upon to engage with these structures that comprise and constitute our subjectivity and thereby adopt an *insurgent* disposition to these structures and also that within ourselves.

Specifically these transitional deindustrializing cities represent a moment of weakness and insecurity about what it means to be urban. Mobilizing critical, self-critical and projective dispositions capable of meeting the challenges of their context, these engaged residents mobilize inquiries that put the inquirer on the spot, produce discomfort, and have potency: the capacity to change the way the inquirer thinks, acts and inhabits urban landscapes. To reiterate, these practices are not academic, but rather, are vital responses to the pressing questions that drive our lived-experience of city life and are in the end matters of survival. This is why, according to activists like John George, failure is not an option.

To repeat, transitional urban centers demand that activists and practitioners not be locked myopically within the fox hole of the dominant perspective, but rather have the capacity to:

...traverse the range of human values and value-feelings and *be able* to look with many kinds of eyes and consciences from the heights into every distance, from the depths into every height, from the corners into every wide expanse.” (BGE 211)⁵⁶⁹

Embedded within transitional urban centers, these urban centers themselves have the capacity to become sorts of foxholes. Cities have a certain degree of receptivity to urban activism, and thus they can become discrete political entities that mediate between culturally rooted criticisms and the larger political landscape. This is more the case in transitional cities like Windsor and Detroit. Justin Langois (Senior Research Fellow, Broken City Lab) described Windsor

⁵⁶⁹ See 3.3.

and Detroit in personal conversation as 'touchable' cities where smaller cultural actions can have a large effect upon the cultural and political landscape of the region. These cities, in turn, have the capacity to generate larger political effects. Urban activist actions are rooted in the local and biological in a manner that intimately ties embodied experiences suffering at the hands of economic and political systems to their acts of resistance. From this fertile soil, embedded activist collectives aim to inflict a wound to the overall culture, thus inoculating not only the immediate urban culture, but culture more generally with something new and empowering. Though met with resistance and the 'positive techniques' counterinsurgency, as Nietzsche notes "...on the whole they bring advantage to the fettered spirits..." (HH II 229) by demanding values and practices that are humanly sustainable.

Bibliography

- Aguilar, Louis. "12 Heidelberg fires, all a mystery: Arsons At Detroit Art Project Unsolved, Despite Reward, Publicity, Security Video," *Detroit News*, February 20th, 2015. Accessed April 16, 2016.
<http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/special-reports/2015/02/20/heidelberg-arsons-detroit-hard-solve/23769375/>.
- Alberta, Tim. "Is Dan Gilbert Detroit's New Superhero?" *The Atlantic*, February 27, 2014. Accessed April 16, 2016.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/02/is-dan-gilbert-detroits-new-superhero/425742/>.
- Antonio, Robert. "Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory." *The British Journal of Sociology*, 32, No. 3 (1981): 330-345.
- Austen, Ben. "The Post-Post-Apocalyptic Detroit." *New York Times*, July 11, 2014. Accessed April 16, 2016.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/13/magazine/the-post-post-apocalyptic-detroit.html>.
- Austin, Dan and Sean Doerr, *Lost Detroit: Stories Behind the Motor City's Majestic Ruins*. Charleston: History Press, 2010.
- Belton, Benjamin. *Orinoco Flow: Culture, Narrative, and the Political Economy of Information*. Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2003.
- Berkowitz, Peter. "Nietzsche's Ethics of History." *The Review of Politics*, 56, No. 1 (Winter, 1994): 5-27.
- Binelli, Mark. *Detroit City Is the Place to Be: The Afterlife of an American Metropolis*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012.
- Boggs, Grace Lee. *The Next American Revolution: Sustainable activism for the twenty-first century*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012.
- , "One thing leads to another: Cooperative Developments in Urban Communities," in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Edited by Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt 102-107. Berlin: Federal Cultural Foundation, 2004.
- Boggs, Grace Lee and James Boggs. *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Monthly Review, 1974.

- Bossen, Howard and John P. Beck (ed.). *Detroit Resurgent*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014.
- Broke, Pete. "Photos of Detroit Need to Move Beyond Ruin Porn." *Wired*, June 2012.
- Bronner, Stephen. *Of Critical Theory and its Theorists*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994.
- Bunge, William and Gwendolyn Warren. *Field Notes: I*. Detroit: The Detroit Geographical Expedition and Institute, 1969.
- Bunge, William and Gwendolyn Warren. *Field Notes: III*. Detroit: The Detroit Geographical Expedition and Institute, 1969.
- Callahan, Yesha. "Kwame Kilpatrick, former Detroit mayor, sentenced to 28 years in prison for corruption." *Clutch News*, October 10, 2013. Accessed August 12, 2016. <http://www.clutchmagonline.com/2013/10/kwame-kilpatrick-former-detroit-mayor-sentenced-28-years-prison-corruption/>.
- Carey, Nick. "Cheap Detroit Houses Scooped Up By Investors Can Be Costly For Communities, Bad News For Buyers." *Huffington Post*, July 3, 2013. Accessed April 15, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/03/cheap-detroit-houses_n_3538213.html.
- Chasmar, Jessica. "Bankrupt Detroit: As Many As 50,000 Stray Dogs Roam City In Packs." *Washington Times*, August 21, 2013. Accessed July 20, 2014. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/aug/21/bankrupt-detroit-many-50000-stray-dogs-roam-city-s/>.
- Che, Deborah. "Connecting the Dots to Urban Revitalization with the Heidelberg Project." *Material Culture*, 39, No. 1 (Spring 2007): 33-49.
- Cherney, Mike. "Detroit's Bankruptcy: 40% of Street Lights Don't Work, 66% of Ambulances Out of Service." *Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 2013. Accessed July 20, 2014. <http://blogs.wsj.com/moneybeat/2013/07/18/detroits-bankruptcy-40-of-street-lights-dont-work-66-of-ambulances-out-of-service/>.
- Chen, Dalson. "A tale of two cities: Windsor and Detroit murder rates show stark contrast." *The Windsor Star*, December 4, 2012. Accessed May 9, 2016. <http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/a-tale-of-two-cities-windsor-and-detroit-murder-rates-show-stark-contrast>.
- "City fees put future of Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market in doubt," *Windsor Star*, April 8, 2015, Accessed April 25, 2016.

<http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/city-fees-put-future-of-downtown-windsor-farmers-market-in-doubt>.

Chu, Dan and Maria Leonhauser. "Two Angry Neighbors Burn Out a Nest of Crack Dealers, but Now They're in Big Trouble Themselves." *People*, 29, No. 12, March 28, 1988. Accessed April 16, 2016.
<http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20098589,00.html>.

City Desk. "Judges Agree Windsor Has Some World-Class Pizza." *Windsor Star*, March 30, 2014. Accessed April 20, 2016.
<http://windsorstar.com/news/judges-agree-windsor-has-some-world-class-pizza>.

Clark, Anna. "Detroit's Dan Gilbert and the 'Savior Complex'." *CJR*, August 18, 2014. Accessed April 16, 2016.
http://www.cjr.org/united_states_project/dan_gilbert_detroit.php.

Cook, Deborah. *The Culture Industry Revisited: Theodor W. Adorno on Mass Culture*. Toronto: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996.

Crawford, Matthew. *Shop Class as Soulcraft: An inquiry into the value of work*. New York: Penguin Books, 2010.

Davie, Monica. "Financial Crisis Just a Symptom of Detroit's Woes." *New York Times*, July 8, 2013. Accessed July 18, 2014.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/09/us/financial-crisis-just-a-symptom-of-detroits-woes.html>.

Dolan, Matthew, Susan Tompor, and John Gallagher. "Detroit Rising: Life After Bankruptcy." *Detroit Freepress*, November 8, 2015. Accessed April 21, 2016. <http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/detroit-reborn/2015/11/08/detroit-rising-life-after-bankruptcy/75085252/>.

Florida, Richard. *Who's Your City?: How the creative economy is making where to live the most important decision of your life*. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2009.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Random House, 1977.

----- . *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1977.

Franco, Paul. "Nietzsche's 'Human, All Too Human' and the Problem of Culture" *The Review of Politics*, 69, No. 2 (Spring, 2007): 215-243.

Gallagher, John. "Detroit" in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Edited by Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt 40-43. Berlin: Federal Cultural Foundation, 2004.

------. *Reimagining Detroit, Opportunities for Redefining an American City*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010.

Gemes, Ken. "Postmodernism's Use and Abuse of Nietzsche." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 62, No. 2 (Mar., 2001): 337-360.

Guerra, Jennifer. "Art vs. Ruin Porn," *Michigan Radio*, January 12, 2011. Accessed July 20, 2014. <http://michiganradio.org/post/artpod-art-vs-ruin-porn#stream/0>.

Gunzel, Stephan. "Nietzsche's Geophilosophy." *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 25 (Spring, 2003): 78-91.

Haber, Matt. "Remaking Detroit: Can Creative Companies Save an American City on the Brink?" *Co-Create*, February 13, 2013. Accessed July 7, 2016. <http://www.fastcocrete.com/1682409/remaking-detroit-can-creative-companies-save-an-american-city-on-the-brink>.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987.

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin Books, 2004.

------. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Harlow, Poppy. "Detroit: Too broke to bury their dead." *CNN Money*, October 1, 2009. Accessed July 20, 2014. http://money.cnn.com/2009/10/01/news/economy/_morgue/.

Herscher, Andrew. *The Unreal Estate Guide to Detroit*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012.

Herron, Jerry. *AfterCulture: Detroit and the Humiliation of History*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993.

------. "I Remember Detroit," in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Edited by Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt 28-39. Berlin: Federal Cultural Foundation, 2004.

----- . "Borderland/ Borderama/ Detroit: Part 1." *Places*, July 2010. Accessed April 20, 2016. <https://placesjournal.org/article/borderama-detroit-1/>.

----- . "The Forgetting Machine: Notes Toward a History of Detroit." *Places*, January 2012. Accessed April 21, 2016. <https://placesjournal.org/article/the-forgetting-machine-notes-toward-a-history-of-detroit>.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. London : Penguin Books, 1985.

Horkheimer, Max. *Eclipse of Reason*. New York: Continuum, 1974.

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1972.

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York : Modern Library, 2011.

Jackson, Kenneth T. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of United States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Janaway, Christopher. "Autonomy, Affect, and the Self in Nietzsche's Project of Genealogy," in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*. Edited by K. Gemes and S. May, 51-68. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Kees, Julie Griffith. "Review: Orinoco Flow: Culture, Narrative, and the Political Economy of Information by Benjamin Keith Belton." *The Library Quarterly*, 75, No. 4 (October 2005): 528-533.

Kellner, Douglas. "Critical Theory and the Crisis of Social Theory." *Sociological Perspectives* 33.1, (1990): 11-33.

Kerr, Joe. "Trouble in Motor City," in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Edited by Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt 63-70. Berlin: Federal Cultural Foundation, 2004.

Krishnan, Manisha. "This City Near Detroit Might Be the 'Worst Place on Earth'." *Vice Magazine*, April 14th, 2016. Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://www.vice.com/read/windsor-ontario-residents-tell-us-why-its-not-the-worst-place-on-earth>.

Klinefelter, Quinn. "Detroit Chief OK with Private Security Policing Downtown." July 6, 2016. Accessed July 6, 2016. <http://wdet.org/posts/2016/07/06/83422-detroit-chief-ok-with-private-security-policing-downtown/>.

LeDuff, Charlie. *Detroit: An American Autopsy*. New York: Penguin, 2013.

Leary, John Patrick. "Detroitism." *Guernica: a Magazine of Art and Politics*, January 15, 2011. Accessed July 20, 2014.
<https://www.guernicamag.com/features/leary>.

Brian Leiter, "Nietzsche's Theory of the Will," in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*. Edited by K. Gemes and S. May, 107-126. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Malpas, Jeff. "We Hyperboreans", in *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*. Edited by Julian Young, 195-213. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

McGraw, Bill. "Farming takes Root in Detroit: Hopes Spreads Along with the Compost." *Detroit Free Press*, May 4, 2009.

Moceri, Toni. "Devils Night," in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Edited by Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt 71-84. Berlin: Federal Cultural Foundation, 2004

Moore, Andrew. *Detroit Disassembled*. New York: Damiani, 2010.

Moskowitz, Peter. "The Two Detroits: A city both collapsing and gentrifying at the same time," *The Guardian*, February 5, 2015. Accessed July 7, 2016.
<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/feb/05/detroit-city-collapsing-gentrifying>.

Muler, Joann. "Billionaire Bridge Owner's Greed Lands Him In Jail," *Forbes*, January 12, 2012. Accessed July 7, 2016.
<http://www.forbes.com/sites/joannmuller/2012/01/12/billionaire-bridge-owners-greed-lands-him-in-jail/#2b5c6547e2d3>.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

----- . *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

----- . *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols And Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

----- . *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

----- . *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

- . *Human, All Too Human: A Book for free Spirits*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- . *Twilight of the Idols: or How to Philosophize with a Hammer*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- . *Untimely Meditations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- . *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. New York: Random House, 1995.
- Pearson, Craig. "Windsor again No. 1 with unemployment, but it's worse than that," *The Windsor Star*, February 6, 2015. Accessed May 9, 2016. <http://windsorstar.com/news/windsor-again-no-1-with-unemployment-but-its-worse-than-that>.
- Plato, *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Mino, Phaedo*. Cambridge: Hackett, 2002.
- Poellner, Peter. "Nietzschean Freedom," in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*. Edited by K. Gemes and S. May, 107-126. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Read, Colin. "Uppermost Canada: The Western District and the Detroit Frontier, 1800-1850." *Michigan Historical Review* 28.1 (2002): 137.
- Richardson, John. "Nietzsche's Freedoms" in *Nietzsche on Freedom and Autonomy*. Edited by K. Gemes and S. May, 127-150. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- . "Nietzsche, Language, Community," in *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*. Edited by Julian Young, 214-243. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Roderick, Rick. "Philosophy and Human Values Lecture 1: Socrates and the Life of Inquiry," Video lecture with transcript recorded for The Teaching Company, Virginia, 1990. Accessed March 20, 2016. <http://rickroderick.org/101-socrates-and-the-life-of-inquiry-1990/>.
- . "Nietzsche and the Postmodern Condition: Nietzsche as Myth and Mythmaker," Video lecture with transcript recorded for The Teaching Company, Virginia, 1991. Accessed May 15, 2016. <http://rickroderick.org/201-nietzsche-as-myth-and-mythmaker-1991/>.

- Rose, Judd. "Detroit's Agony," *Primetime Live*, ABC, November 8, 1990.
- Rubin, Neal. "No hipsters? Graffiti a sign of widening divide in Detroit neighborhood," *Detroit News*, August 1, 2013. Accessed June 22, 2014. <http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20130801/METRO01/308010039>.
- Runyan, Robin. "Mies van der Rohe Townhouse Hits Market for \$279K: *Create your own mid-century modern masterpiece*," *Curbed Detroit*, May 9, 2016. Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://detroit.curbed.com/2016/3/9/11185876/mies-van-der-rohe-townhouse-for-sale-mid-century-modern>.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books, 2003.
- Serapio, Michael. "Colbert attack on 'Earth's rectum' Windsor extends to Winnipeg, CBC." *CBC News Windsor*, November 15, 2012. Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/colbert-attack-on-earth-s-rectum-windsor-extends-to-winnipeg-cbc-1.1185799>.
- Shibley, Robert. *2005 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence: Reinventing Downtown*, Detroit: Bruner Foundation, 2005.
- Sluga, Hans. "The Time Is Coming When One Will Have to Relearn about Politics," in *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*. Edited by Julian Young, 31-50. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Sugrue, Thomas J. *The Origins Of The Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Swanton, Christine. "Nietzsche and the 'Collective Individual'," in *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*. Edited by Julian Young, 174-194. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Taylor, Charles. *The Malaise of Modernity*. Concord: House of Anansi, 1991.
- Thomas, June Manning. *Redevelopment and Race: Planning A Finer City In Postwar Detroit*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013.
- Thorne, Liz. "Downtown Farmers' Market Saved." *WindsoriteDOTca News*, May 1, 2015. Accessed April 25, 2016. <http://windsorite.ca/2015/05/downtown-windsor-farmers-market-saved/>.
- Waldheim, Charles. "Motor City," in *Shrinking Cities: Detroit*. Edited by Mende, Doreen and Phillip Oswalt 55-62. Berlin: Federal Cultural Foundation, 2004.

- Walsh, David. "Detroit in Ruins." *World Socialist Web Site*, May 5th. 1997. Accessed July 20, 2014. <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/1997/05/det-m97.html>.
- Walters, Wendy. "Turning the Neighborhood Inside Out: Imagining a New Detroit in Tyree Guyton's Heidelberg Project." *TDR: The Drama Review*, 45.1 (2001), 64-93.
- Wile, Rob. "This Is For Everyone Who's Thinking Of Buying One Of Those \$500 Homes In Detroit." *Business Insider*, July 23, 2013. Accessed April 15, 2016. <http://www.businessinsider.com/buying-cheap-property-in-detroit-2013-7>.
- Wilhelm, Trevor. "Drunk Man Swims Across Detroit River (With Video)." *Windsor Star*, July 23, 2013. Accessed July 20, 2014. <http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/drunken-man-attempts-swim-across-detroit-river>.
- Woods, Ashley. "A Guide To Detroit's Chapter 9 Default And How Bankruptcy Could Change The City." *Huffington Post*, July 24, 2013. Accessed August 12, 2016. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/24/detroit-bankruptcy-chapter-9_n_3640734.html
- Young, Julian. Introduction to *Individual and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy*. Edited by Julian Young, 174-194. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Websites and Reports:

Broken City Lab. "About Broken City Lab," Accessed March 22, 2016.
<http://www.brokencitylab.org/about/>.

Broken City Lab. "Broken City Lab Projects," Accessed March 22, 2016.
<http://www.brokencitylab.org/projects/>.

Broken City Lab. "Broken City Lab Windsor Signage," May 25, 2009, Accessed April 21, 2016. <http://www.brokencitylab.org/blog/windsor-signage/>.

Broken City Lab. "Broken City Lab Blog," September 29, 2008, Accessed April 25, 2016. <http://www.brokencitylab.org/blog/bcl-report-sept-29-2008/>.

CAMPP. "CAMPP: Citizens for an Accountable Megahospital Planning Process: About," Accessed April 26, 2016.
<http://windsormegahospital.weebly.com/about-campp.html>.

City of Windsor. "Tax Rebates and Relief." Accessed April 16, 2016.
<http://www.citywindsor.ca/cityhall/Taxes--and-Assessment-/Pages/Tax-Rebates-and-Relief.aspx>.

CNN. "Anthony Bourdain, Parts Unknown: Detroit, Season 2, Episode 8." November 10, 2013. Accessed August 22, 2016.
<http://www.cnn.com/video/shows/anthony-bourdain-parts-unknown/season-2/detroit/>.

Detroit Fresh Food Access Initiative, *Report of Taskforce Findings August 2008*, Accessed April 20, 2016.
https://assets.jhsph.edu/clf/mod_clfResource/doc/Detroit_Fresh_Food_Access_Initiative_report.pdf.

Detroit International Jazz Festival. "34th Annual Detroit Jazz Festival: Annual Report, August 30 – September 2 2013," Accessed April 16, 2016.
<http://www.detroitjazzfest.com/pdf/2013-DJF-Annual-Report.pdf>.

Detroit Works Long Term Planning Committee. *Detroit Future City Strategic Framework*. Detroit: Inland Press, 2012.

Detroit Red Wings. "Red Wings NHL Club Page," Accessed June 28, 2016.
<http://redwings.nhl.com/club/page.htm?id=43781>.

Eyes on Windsor, "Events: Tug Across the River: the only international tug of war", July 10, 2015, Accessed July 20, 2014.
<http://eyesonwindsor.com/event/tug-across-the-river/>.

- Heidelberg Project. "The Heidelberg Project: Publications," October 5th, 2013, Accessed April 16, 2016. http://www.heidelberg.org/news_publications/.
- Kresge Foundation. "Kresge Foundation: News." February 4, 2015. Accessed July 7, 2016. <http://kresge.org/news/projects-exemplify-kresge-commitment-detroit-future-city-0>.
- Loveland. "Loveland Technologies." Accessed April 26, 2016. <https://makeloveland.com/company>.
- Neighbors Building Brightmoor. "Neighbors Building Brightmoor: History." Accessed April 25, 2016. <http://neighborsbuildingbrightmoor.org/about-us/a-brief-history/>.
- Vacant Windsor. "Facebook: Vacant Windsor," December 16, 2015, Accessed April 26, 2016. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Windsorblight/>.
- United States Census Bureau. "Detroit (city), Michigan," *State & County QuickFacts*. Accessed January 21, 2013. www.census.gov.
- Vacant Windsor. "Vacant Windsor." Accessed April 26, 2016. <http://vacantwindsor.weebly.com/>.
- Wayne State University. "Wayne State University: Campus Safety." Accessed April 20, 2016. <https://wayne.edu/safety/>.
- Windsor Essex Economic Development. "Windsor Essex, Grown Right Here: Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market," Accessed April 20, 2016. <http://www.welookforlocal.ca/node/35>.